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HOLY

LOVER

MARIE CONWAY OEMLER





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THE HOLY LOVER

By The Same Author

THE BUTTERFLY MAN

THE ETERNAL TWO

THE PURPLE HEIGHTS

SHEPHERDS

TWO SHALL BE BORN

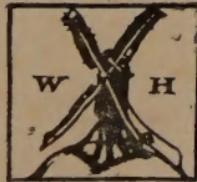
WHERE THE YOUNG CHILD WAS

A WOMAN NAMED SMITH

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THE HOLY LOVER

By
MARIE CONWAY
OEMLER



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ELFRIDA DE RENNE BARROW
HER BOOK

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LIST OF CHARACTERS

JOHN WESLEY, *The Holy Lover*

CHARLES WESLEY,

CHARLES DELAMOTTE,

BENJAMEN INGHAM,

SOPHY HOPKEY, *The Girl*

JAMES EDWARD OGLETHORPE, *The Governor of Georgia*

MR. THOMAS CAUSTON, *Chief Magistrate of Savannah*

MRS. CAUSTON, *Sophy's Aunt*

TOM MELLICHAMP, *A Young Scamp*

WILLIAM WILLIAMSON, *Destiny's Deputy*

DOCTOR JOHN HAWKINS, *The Surgeon of Frederica*

BEATA HAWKINS, *The Surgeon's Wife*

MRS. WELCH, *Trouble*

MISS FOSSETT, *Sophy's Friend*

MISS BOVEY,

MR. BURNSIDE,

THE HIRD FAMILY, *Good People*

THE MORAVIAN BRETHREN,

THE SALZBURGERS,

SAVANNAH,

FREDERICA,

GEORGIA, *An Empire*

The Holy Club

THE HOLY LOVER

CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND

“ SUKEY ! ” his father once shrieked to his mother in a fit of exasperation, “ I profess, Sweetheart, I don’t believe our Jack would attend to the most pressing necessities of nature, even, if he couldn’t give a reason for it ! ”

Our Jack at the age of seven was like that : as provoking a reasoning little prig as ever stirred the bile of ordinary mortals. He had, then, very good reason for selecting the Reverend Samuel Wesley and Susannah Annesley his wife for parents, and the country parsonages of Epworth and Woote—of which latter place his father also held the living—for nursery and school, in the year of our Lord seventeen hundred and three. They explained him, and he them, and country parsonages where high thinking and plain living—enforced by debt—were the order of the day.

To elect to be born the fifteenth of the nineteen children of a poor and learned parson, and an amazing mother who was the twenty-fourth or maybe the twenty-fifth child of another pious and learned parson, smacks of daring and adventure. John Wesley achieved this at the very outset of his career, though to the casual he must have seemed to make his appearance as but one among many.

Children came with a sort of cosmic regularity to Epworth parsonage, and were received by the intrepid

woman who bore them and the godly cleric who begot them, as welcome arrows in their very full quiver. Nine of the nineteen departed in infancy ; but John, having important business to transact later on, remained ; growing up a thin fledgling in a crowded but well-regulated nest, and moulded, trained, disciplined, educated by glorious Susannah Wesley. Had his mother been Papist instead of Protestant, it is quite probable that the Roman Catholic Mass would now be celebrated on the altars of Westminster and St. Paul's.

“ From earliest childhood he . . . seemed to feel answerable to his reason and his conscience for everything he did.” His mother’s work. His reason and his conscience were hers. “ He would do nothing, without first reflecting on its fitness and propriety. If asked, out of the common way of meals to have, for instance, a piece of bread, or fruit, he would answer with the coolest unconcern, ‘ I thank you. I will think of it.’ ”

His mother made it a rigid rule that her children should never eat between meals ; just as, when they were babies of no more than a year, she had trained them never to cry aloud. Jack translated the eating-between-meals edict into a matter of “ fitness and propriety ” and to the end of his days made his diet a moral issue, something which impinged upon salvation.

To reason about everything was an instinct with him.

“ Child ! ” his badgered father would shout, “ you think to carry everything by dint of argument ! You’ll soon find out how little is ever done in this world by close reasoning ! ”

Nevertheless, the argumentative small boy by close reasoning persuaded the rector to allow him to communicate at the early age of eight. Mercifully he didn’t carry his youthful sanctimoniousness to the degree to

which the even younger saint Aloysius Gonzaga had carried his ; we hear nothing of Jacky vowing his virginity to the Lord at the age of seven.

There is a possibility that the Wesley youngsters might have become the average young devils which infest the average home, had not their marvellous mother taken her bantlings firmly in hand. With Susannah Wesley at the helm, her children never had the chance to become average or ordinary. And of them all, her favourite was her son John.

It had so happened that when the parsonage was set afire and burned, John, then a baby of three years, had been forgotten in the nursery chamber from which the nurse fled with the other children. Awakened by the heat and the crackling of flames, the child called for his nurse to come and take him up. When none answered his cries, the little man slipped out of his bed, toddled across the smoking floor, and scrambled upon a chest which stood under one of the windows.

His parents had escaped from their own blazing bed-chamber, and the father counted heads. One small head was missing : Jacky's ! The frantic man was prevented by the flames from rushing into the burning house to his child's rescue ; falling on his knees, he prayed with sobs and groans for the little boy whom all gave up for lost.

In the meantime, two neighbours who had rushed to the scene happened to spy the small figure at an upper window of the low-roofed house, and one man climbing upon the other's shoulders managed to snatch the child to safety just as the whole roof crashed in.

Upon his mother's heart this restoration of her darling to her arms made an indelible impression. It seemed to her an immediate answer to prayer, and she felt that

Jacky had been saved for some divine high purpose. She so impressed this upon the wax of his mind that he was never to forget it. He was literally a brand plucked from the burning.

He grew up his mother in breeches. From her came his executive ability, his power to organize, plan, and direct, and so to economize and use his scanty means that they accommodated themselves to his needs and served his ends. From her came his inflexibility of temper, his relentless steadiness, his logic, his intellect, even his religion. And, if one may inherit a lack, Jacky the beloved inherited from his mother his lack of humour, his inability to perceive the necessity for laughter. It was this lack of humour which occasioned a certain hardness and want of *humanness* in his attitude and contacts.

His father was his mother's antithesis—hot-headed, impatient, impractical—but with the virtues of his defects, and the kindness of heart which so often accompanies an irascible temper. He was temperamental ; and he wrote interminable verses, which Mr. Pope damned in the "Dunciad." Also, he was all his life in debt. He had once been cast into prison for it.

A headlong fellow, the parson ; a highhanded, two-fisted old tory of a shepherd, hauling his mangy sheep into the fold by the scruff or the tail, whichever came first. His intemperate, tactless zeal so enraged his boors, that after their fashion they revenged themselves upon him, annoying his children, houghing his cattle, firing his ricks, and, as a broader expression of displeasure, once or twice trying to roast him and his brood alive by burning his house about his ears.

And yet the gifted family kept poor by his pigheadedness, the beautiful, gifted wife and daughters forced as it

were to live in exile, adored and obeyed him, in that Golden Age of Husbands and Fathers. The brilliant sons, pinched for funds among their fellows at college, revered him. And the savage yokels of his parish came presently to heel, so that in his old age he could write with a proud pen :

“ There is not a Dissenter nor ■ Papist among them ! ”

It is plain, then, that Jacky showed genius in selecting parents to suit his temperament, a matter most children neglect. His brother Samuel was thirteen years older, his brother Charles four years younger. Among these three notable brothers coruscated seven dazzling sisters. There was not such another family in all Britain, for Susannah Wesley was her children’s teacher until her boys were sent away to school. Her methods were drastic, but the results, with the boys, were notable. In the case of the girls there was a rather heavy reckoning to be paid by and by. But all her children were scholars. At the age of eight, little Hetty could read the New Testament in Greek !

Jacky left the shelter of his mother’s wing when, at not more than eleven, he became a pupil at the Charterhouse, exchanging Susannah and Epworth for masters and London. The frail child, so tenderly guarded, so strictly disciplined, had now to meet and bear the brutality of the British schoolboy to his juniors. The child made no complaint.

His mother, by birth and family connections, by every grace of person, mind, and heart, was a gentlewoman ; his father a man of excellent family, a scholar, a clergyman of the Establishment. For all that, his father was a country parish priest in painfully straitened circumstances, and John Wesley was a poor man’s son. But

poverty fostered the pride that had all along lain dormant in him, and brought to light the dominant characteristic of such souls as his—the will and ability to rule.

Long afterwards it was told how one day Tooke the usher, who later became Head, happened to open a door unexpectedly upon young Jack Wesley haranguing an attentive circle of small boys. Mr. Tooke beckoned the orator outside.

“How is it,” he asked reprovingly, “that I find you so often with the boys of the lower forms? Why are you not with the older boys, as you should be? Young gentlemen do better to associate with their equals.”

“Better to rule in hell than to serve in heaven, Mr. Tooke,” said young John Wesley.

He still said his prayers twice daily, read his Bible, went regularly to church. But Susannah’s firm hand not being daily on the reins, her colt frisked normally, kicking up his playful heels with other colts. The outward forms of religion sufficed him for godliness.

He was elected to Christ Church College when he was still under twenty—a sprightly, charming boy for all his learning. Though he read godly books, he . . . “had not all this time so much as a notion of inward holiness; nay, went on habitually and for the most part very contentedly in some one or other known sin, though with some intermission and short struggles” . . . especially after the Holy Communion which he had to receive thrice a year.

Then his heritage from the rector showed itself: he began to scribble verses, poetry quite unlike the interminable “History of the Old and New Testament: in Verse: By Rev. Samuel Wesley, M.A.” and the same author’s equally endless “Dissertations on Job.” John preferred briefer themes. He paraphrased a psalm.

And he celebrated the pilgrim's progress of *Chloe's Flea*—very secular peregrinations indeed.

Any Oxford undergraduate with an itch for rhyming could have perpetrated these jejune and mediocre verses. The poem's sole significance lies in the fact that John Wesley adapted it in his salad days ; and may be, too, for the not unnatural suspicion of the profane that that sort of flea usually gets into the poet's shirt.

Another of his father's talents manifested itself in the son : unable to make ends meet, the young fellow blithely borrowed what he needed, though how he was to repay the loans he couldn't for the life of him have said. He had forty pounds a year with which to meet the expenses of an Oxford student ; and to this he could hope to add only such meagre driblets as his father could spare or his mother squeeze out. Being young, he hoped for the best and lost no sleep over vexing finances.

He was popular enough. His wit, his attainments, the charm of his conversation, his fine manners, had already won him a welcome place in desirable circles. One of the best friends he had made in Oxford was Robert Kirkham, the son of the rector of Stanton, and it was at Robert's urging that John visited Stanton Rectory and met his friend's parents, his widowed sister, Mrs. Chapone, and his younger sisters Damaris and Betty. John Wesley fell in love with Betty, and found in her “a religious friend, which I never had till now.”

Betty in the grace of her youth, serious, cultivated, intelligently religious, was of the right age and disposition to captivate his boyish heart. She was the centre of that delightful circle which included her sister Damaris, her brother Robert, Charles and John Wesley, and the Granville girls. One of these same Granville girls, Mary, then the young widow Mrs. Pendarves, was to become

the famous, the adored Mrs. Delany, who left the imprint of her exquisite personality upon every one who met her. Burke called her "the best-bred woman in the world." Royalty was glad to call her "friend"; in her youth John Wesley called her "Aspasia."

This charming group of intellectual young people read together and discussed what they read. Being young and English they took themselves seriously. They wrote one another long literary letters, signed with romantic pseudonyms, after the sentimental fashion of the day. Betty was "Varanese," Anne Granville "Selima," Charles Wesley "Araspes," Mary "Aspasia," and John Wesley "Cyrus."

He owed much to the society of these gracious, high-bred women. They cultivated his religious aspirations and his literary talents, and their society added a final polish to his really beautiful manners. Wesley had drawn in his love of women with his mother's milk; he loved women: their society was necessary to his happiness. All his life he was indebted to women—his mother, his sisters, the enchanting friends of his first youth, the women he loved, the women who loved him, the women who had for him a passionate friendship, the women who presently looked to him as a guide to God.

He loved women: all sane saints do. And he never understood them, misunderstanding most where he loved most—in the end, he even misunderstood the most glorious of them all, his own mother, and doubted whether she was truly converted! But he never failed to appeal to the ardent emotional and religious nature of women. Their souls turned to him as to a magnet.

John Wesley was a man many women would revere, some women would hate, a few women could love—but no woman should marry.

One April morning the friends sat together on a hill near Stanton Rectory, around them outspread the green gracious countryside of England, the yet untouched England of the Eighteenth Century.

"I want you," said the girl "Varanese" to the boy "Cyrus," who sat beside her, "to read a book I am much given to. I beg you would read Thomas à Kempis' 'Imitation of Christ.' "

"I will read anything *you* ask me to read," said the boy, ardently.

"Then I shall ask you to read Mr. Law's 'Christian Perfection,' too," said Betty, smiling.

He read the books, because Betty Kirkham asked him : à Kempis angered him—his demands were too exacting. He thought William Law, too, made such impossible demands that no mere mortal could attain Christian Perfection.

Yet these two books were bugle-calls at daybreak. Because of them he "began to alter the whole form of conversation, and to set in earnest about a new life" ; he began to "aim at and pray for inward holiness."

He had had his goal in plain sight ; a respectable, scholarly, successful life, with a fair competency and maybe, after a while, a well-born helpmeet. And, of course, quite the right sort of friends. But . . . "in the providence of God, my attention was called to the *Imitation of Christ*."

He reread Bishop Taylor's "Holy Living and Dying," that book so dear to Churchmen, with new interest and attention. He, too, saw that theology was rather a divine life than a divine knowledge, and he had as little faith in the human mind as an instrument of truth. Truth could only be made known to man through divine revelation. John Wesley determined that he himself, taking

revealed religion for his guide, would live the divine life and prove the truth for himself.

So he wrote home that he wished to enter the Church but had doubts of his fitness. He didn't wish to be a callow clergyman. Too many of that sort already infested the Church of England, a refuge for incompetents shunted into easy livings. What to do with Lord Thingumbobb's stupid second son's even stupider second son ? For Lady Fiddlefaddle's iron-skulled lummox of a nephew ? For a Great Family's time-serving tutor's lazy do-nothing ? Oh, isn't the living at Shovel-cum-Spade a pretty fair place ? Let's get the poor fellow a living, a nice, Church living, and have him off our hands, with peace to our conscience and ease to our purse !

There were noble and notable exceptions ; the fact remained that too many tares flourished in the Church wheat. And the Wesleys were honest grain. The rector hadn't any love for callow clergymen either. Better let Jack be perfectly sure, before he took up duties which might not be those he was best fitted to perform.

“ The change in you occasions me some speculation,” said his mother. “ But I can't but hope it proceeds from the Holy Spirit, which by taking away your relish for sensual enjoyments might prepare your mind for things of a more sublime and spiritual nature.”

John had walked in the stern shadow of his mother's conscience ; now he began to walk in the more morbid shadow of his own as well, trying to make his logical mind over into a theological one. He wished to rid himself overnight of everything that savoured of “ a relish for sensual enjoyments.” One wonders what those “ sensual enjoyments ” could possibly have been ? Never robust, his slight body craved sleep. He liked to dance with his sisters and their friends on his visits home. He liked to

play parlour games. He liked to read the news of the day, going to the Coffee House for that purpose. He had the scholar's passion for the classics, adored poetry, relished romantic fiction, had a weakness for plays, and something headier than a mere relish for the company of accomplished women. Now that he began to torment himself with rigid examinations of conscience, he asked himself anxiously :

“ Do I love women and company better than God ? ”

And he resolved to bring his young body into subjection. He would sleep as little as nature would bear, rising at four in the morning, winter and summer. He would eat next to nothing, drink only water ; and whenever he had to make a journey, within twenty-five miles or so, he would walk, to save the coach-hire for charity. He kept a diary, accounting for every minute of his time, making for himself the axiom, *“ Idleness slays.”*

Wine never tempted him. He loved women, but his conscience made him wary and his purse chary. His verses became hymns. Conversation became a means of grace. One lovely, simple joy he kept and cherished, his passion for gardens. There was never a time when he didn't love a garden, and whenever he could, he worked in one. At Wroote and Epworth he built seats and arbours, planted vines, pruned trees and shrubs, cultivated blossoms with the true garden-lover's zest. All other “sensual relishes” went overboard, but he never thought time spent in gardens wasted. Maybe he remembered that the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and walked in the garden in the cool of the day.

That indefatigable old borrower, his father, raised the needed funds to cover the expenses of ordination, and John was presently a Deacon of the Church of England. A few months later he was elected Fellow of Lincoln.

"I'm so hard-pressed I won't have so much as five pounds to keep the family until after harvest," his father cried joyously. "Probably I shan't be able to do anything for Charles, when he goes up to the University. What will be my own fate, God only knows, but—*sed passi graviora*—whatever comes to me, my Jack is Fellow of Lincoln!"

The Rector borrowed more to send to his Mr. Fellow-elect of Lincoln, who took the unexpected largesse, paid all his debts, and wrote his brother Sam he had more than ten pounds remaining. His debt-making days were done with. He was more than the Fellow his father rejoiced over; he was shaping toward the son of his mother's prayers.

To save the expense of a barber, he wore his hair long. He "rid himself of unprofitable friends," discovering that even their harmless conversation damped his ardour and took his mind off the work he had set out to do.

"Mondays and Tuesdays he devoted himself to the Greek and Roman classics, historians, and poets; Wednesdays, to logic and ethics; Thursdays, to Hebrew and Arabic; Fridays, to metaphysics and natural philosophy; Saturdays, to oratory and poetry, chiefly composing; and Sundays, to divinity. In intermediate hours he perfected himself in the French language. . . . Sometimes he amused himself with experiments in optics; and in mathematics he studied Euclid, Kell, and Sir Isaac Newton. First he read an author regularly through, and then transcribed into a Commonplace Book such passages as he thought important or beautiful. In this way he greatly increased his stock of knowledge and inured himself to hard working."

After his ordination, he went back for a while to Wroote as his father's curate, to ■ people "as dull as asses and as

impervious as stones," as his sister Hetty described them. He rejoiced when he was recalled to his duties as Moderator, and returned to Oxford to become the nursing father of the Holy Club.

While John was at Wroote, Charles had foregathered with a few undergraduates whose inclinations, like his, were serious and religious. They met in his room, their object being mutual improvement. They encouraged one another in deeds of practical charity, read the Bible, particularly the New Testament, lived by rule, fasted on Wednesdays and Fridays, meditated, prayed, and received the sacrament weekly. This, in Oxford, where cynical infidelity was the rule rather than the exception ! John at once took his place in the little company of Bible Moths, Bible Bigots, Methodists, the Holy Club : and found exactly what he had long desired.

New life came into the movement with him, who was instantly the leader, the organizing power. He was not then, or ever, an originator ; but he could see the best in an idea, no matter from what source ; he could borrow and utilize what he needed ; he could make into a coherent and workable whole what without his directing insight might very well have disintegrated.

None of these young men could be called wealthy. To give to the needy they had to stint themselves. They visited the sick and prisoners under sentence of death. Jail-birds and paupers were familiar with their faces ; the babes of the poor stretched out feeble hands to them. By pooling their pennies they managed to buy food and medicines for prisoners, books for those needing instruction, and sometimes they were able to release men jailed for small debts.

There was the usual rumpus that is always kicked up when any foolhardy Christian puts his faith to the acid

test. But the Holy Club had learned how desperately even their small labours were needed—and John Wesley was a driving force.

When the young man looked around him, it was as though it were seventeen centuries before, and not seventeen centuries after the sacrifice on Calvary ; so little trace there was of the teachings of the Nazarene. There was spiritual wickedness in high places, appalling wretchedness below.

And the Sabbath day in Christian England was if possible even worse than the week day, since it allowed the people to brawl and guzzle with greater freedom and noise. There might be erudition, scholarship, elegance, grace, politeness, even a form of religion, among the rich, the high-born, the privileged ; there was also among them callous and cynical indifference, the arid heart, the atrophied conscience. And as for the Church, it was but the whole people : the blind leading the blind, both fell bemired in the ditch.

There remained, as always, the Israel among the nation. The wise and just among the clergy, the better and less worldly bishops, raised their voices against the general corruption. But all these jeremiads offered no new and regenerating incentive : they never reached down to that seething, sordid, miserable mass that was the people of England. To that submerged mass, the God of the bishops, the Church-of-England God, belonged to the Court, to the gentry, to the rich, but never to the common people. That God had nothing to do with ragged wretches shambling hellward. As for the Dissenters' God, *He* was a wrathy gentleman who punished those who didn't believe in His dissenting preachers, and reserved a very redhot hell for people who had plenty of money and an agreeable time in this world. Both these

class-conscious Deities punished, or maybe pardoned, capriciously, one never quite understood why. Between Them was small choice, and no chance for humble hearts, for poor sinners. God, then, proving dumb, man preferred to be deaf. It remained for the little scholar at Oxford to make the dumb speak so that the deaf would hear.

His father's health was failing ; he knew his time was short, and he wished his son John to apply for the Epworth living, that Susannah and her daughters might keep the home that had sheltered them so many years. All the Wesleys wanted to see John in his father's place. Sam said it was Jack's plain duty. But John himself didn't wish to leave Oxford, and he brought his powers of casuistry to bear, having to convince himself by convincing others. The Superior General of Loyola's Society of Jesus would have met his most formidable rival in Susannah's Jacky. He never applied for Epworth living until it was too late.

Things were going badly at Oxford. Most of his friends had deserted him, frightened by his increasing ardour, and by what was called his extravagance and fanaticism. The Holy Club had fallen from twenty-seven to five. Aspasia, that matchless lady, no longer wrote him ; his incipient love affair with Betty Kirkham had never progressed much ; and Betty, tired perhaps of waiting on so holy and dilatory a lover, was to marry somebody else.

He had made the acquaintance of the author of "Christian Perfection," and after several conversations, that amiable mystic said with shrewd insight :

"I perceive that you wish to convert the whole world, Mr. Wesley," adding, with a gentle smile : "You must allow God to take His own time about that!"

But the younger man could not see the wisdom of this mild advice. He saw, instead, how much was to be done, and how short man's day is ; and this filled him with terror. Mysticism attracted him dangerously, but mysticism can convert only the individual soul, and John Wesley, as Law had said, wished to convert the whole world. And that, he concluded, called for obvious and practical religion. He would show his faith by his works.

The older men at Oxford openly distrusted his extravagant zeal, as they saw it. There was something . . . well . . . ungentlemanly . . . about being so obstreperously fervent. It just wasn't done. Not among gentlefolk, anyhow. Wesley estranged the conservative and frightened the timid, and both avoided him.

He remained inflexible, indifferent to censure or calumny. He had tried to put Christianity into actual practice, something that maybe a few hundred or so Christians have tried to do in twenty centuries. For this he was facing what could be called failure, even contempt. One by one his followers were falling away from him. And his austerities had so injured his health, that Sam sent him a jingle :

*Does John seem bent beyond his strength to go,
To his frail carcase literally foe,
Lavish of health, as if in haste to die,
And shorten time t' insure eternity ?*

Sam didn't agree with his brother John's notions. It was a bitter disappointment to him that he hadn't been able to bring John around to taking his father's place at Epworth, worth some two hundred a year ; which was vastly more than John earned at Lincoln, even with the tutoring that he had added to his other labours. Sam had pushed aside his brother's casuistical excuses with

the tart rejoinder that he could see in them John's love for himself, but not for his neighbour.

Their father had spent his last strength getting his "Dissertations on Job" through the press. It had been long delayed and he needed John's critical assistance, particularly when it came to arguing with Mr. Virtue, the engraver.

"I would have leviathan's rival, that is, the whale, as well as the crocodile, in the engravings," said the rector fractiously, to John. "As for the elephant, he is so common that he need not be added. I am glad the tombs want no more than retouching. 'Job in Adversity' I leave to your direction, as likewise the frontispiece, which Mr. Virtue is doing, who now duns me pretty hard for money for it."

The fine old man's ears were soon deaf to all dunning. In a few weeks more he had passed away, and those Dissertations from which so much had been hoped were inscribed, by permission, to her Gracious Majesty Queen Caroline, in an elegant Latin dedication.

John Wesley presented his father's book, with its handsome binding and fine engravings, to Her Majesty, who was playing with her maids of honour when the young clergyman was introduced into her presence. She paused, took the book from the kneeling man, and glanced at the cover.

"'Tis prettily bound," said royalty graciously, and put Job on a windowseat without looking at a page of him.

John got another careless smile or two as he bowed and backed out of the presence. Having thus signally honoured his father's labours and memory, the royal lady resumed her interrupted play.

But John's visit to London had more far-reaching results than a queen's few smiles. His old friend Burton

of Corpus Christi happened to be in town, and meeting Wesley, he seized upon him and took him to see the famous Mr. James Edward Oglethorpe, founder of the new colony of Georgia in America, of which Burton himself was one of the Trustees.

The Doctor had long had a sympathetic eye upon the Wesleys and their friends at Oxford. There was urgent need of missionary timber for the new venture, and it occurred to Burton that in these earnest young men he could find just what he wanted. Acting upon Burton's advice, Oglethorpe asked John Wesley to go out to Georgia with him as ■ missionary.

John didn't want to go to Georgia any more than he had wanted to take the living at Epworth.

" Oh, no ! " said he, " I couldn't possibly leave my mother ! " and to all urgings and arguments he had but one reply : " I'm her chief support, the comfort and staff of her age. Whatever would my mother do if I should leave her ? "

" If your mother's approbation can be obtained, will you go then ? "

He was shaken. He had been for some time very restless and unhappy. He wished to remain at Oxford, but he knew that he and his few followers were a laughing-stock there, and that his usefulness was at an end. Suppose God called him elsewhere now ? And he determined to accept his mother's Yes or No as God's own answer. Susannah Wesley's reply was :

" If I had twenty sons I should rejoice that they were all so employed, though I should never see them more ! "

When John consulted William Law and his other friends, they, too, approved his going. Sam thought John's extravagance of devotion would better be allowed to blow off steam and dissipate its fury where it would do

less harm, it had already brought trouble and loss of prestige in Oxford, and this worried and exasperated Sam. An exuberantly radical Christian itching to reform the world is not warranted to make for any family's prospects or peace of mind.

Charles wouldn't stay home if John went : he must go with John. He even agreed to be ordained, though it was John's wish and not his own. He agreed, too, to go out as Secretary for Indian Affairs in Georgia, under Oglethorpe, a post for which he was altogether unfitted. Benjamen Ingham, the son of a magistrate, an amiable and intelligent young man, and Charles Delamotte, the son of a London merchant, two of the faithful, volunteered to accompany the Wesleys. Delamotte was so unwilling to part with John that he offered to go out as his servant if nothing better offered. Once the four had quite made up their minds to go, a sort of glory of exaltation fell upon them.

"Our leaving our native country was not to avoid want, God having given us plenty of temporal blessings, nor to gain the dung and dross of riches and honour : but simply this, to save our own souls," explained John Wesley.

And so he turned his back upon Oxford and set forth for the Province of Georgia in America ; to save his soul—to lose his heart—and to be shuttled between God and a girl.

CHAPTER II

THE HIGH ADVENTURE

COLONEL JAMES EDWARD OGLETHORPE, gentleman adventurer, soldier of fortune, and philanthropist, was bringing out in the *Simmonds* and the *London Merchant* another batch of human culls, the bulk of the raw material with which he built up his Colony of Georgia. These were shiftless English folk too familiar with the inside of debtors' prisons, penniless carpenters, saddlers, mechanics, butchers and bakers and candlestick makers and their women and children ; people who were not vital enough to be bad, but just good enough to be poor. That was their chief crime ; they were poor. Not bad timber, but of inferior quality. Oglethorpe trusted the clean, free air of America to make this warped wood straight. Time would show whether his trust was well founded.

The colonizer brought with him at his own charge a few young men of good family to further their fortunes in the new venture. Aboard the same ship—the *Simmonds*—were some Moravian Brethren in charge of their Bishop, David Nitschman, going out to join their people already settled near Savannah ; and four young gentlemen who were to be missionaries to the heathen, white and red : these were the last remaining members of the Holy Club of Oxford, John and Charles Wesley, Benjamin Ingham, and Charles Delamotte.

It was an over-long and dangerous passage, full of

storms and tempests, a voyage in which the young men experienced for the first time the cruel animosity of the sea. John Wesley's terror of the sea, his fear of death, made him accuse himself of lack of faith. He was horribly afraid to die, and horribly ashamed of being afraid.

"The ship was divided into cabins, with gangways, called streets, between them. The people were disposed into these families, the single men were put by themselves. Each cabin had its door and partitions. Whenever the weather would permit, the ship was cleaned between decks, and washed with vinegar, which kept the place very sweet and healthy. There were constables appointed to prevent any disorders; and everything was carried so easily that during the whole voyage there was no occasion for punishing any one excepting a boy, who was whipped for stealing of turnips.

"Whenever the weather permitted the men were exercised with small arms. There were also thread, worsted, and knitting needles given to the women for making stockings and caps for their families, or mending their clothes and linens."

The young gentlemen of the Holy Club were not called upon to exercise with small arms, their weapons being altogether spiritual. Released from the censorious restraints of Oxford, with long, ocean days before them, they felt free to indulge in a very orgy of austerity. In the bitter black mornings they arose at four o'clock and . . . "from four until five they prayed privately. From five until seven they read the Bible together, then compared what they read with the earliest writings. At seven they breakfasted.

"At eight they had public prayers, and expounded the lesson for the day. From nine until twelve, John

studied German. Delamotte gave himself up to Greek and navigation. Charles wrote sermons. Ingham became schoolmaster to the children aboard.

“At twelve the four met for mutual prayers, and to report what progress they had made. At one they dined, frugally. After dinner, that is, from about half after one until four, they read, or spoke privately to certain passengers they had taken under their direction.

“At four they had evening prayers, and either expounded the lesson or catechized and instructed the children in the presence of the congregation. Five to six was spent in private prayers, and from six to seven they read to three detachments of English passengers, of whom eighty were aboard.”

At seven, John Wesley joined the Moravians at their public service. Ingham, between decks, read to as many as would listen to him. At eight o’clock the four zealots met in private to exhort, instruct, and take counsel with each other. Between nine and ten they went to bed, or rather, cast themselves upon the planks without mats or blankets, and, their stomachs and conscience being light, slept like logs until four the next morning, when they rose to repeat the previous day’s routine.

Able now to do what they had long wished to do, they did it with the regularity of monks and the discipline of soldiers. Their tireless ministrations included everybody—the sailors, the officers, Oglethorpe, all the passengers, including the women and children. Among the women aboard were three who stood out from the rest—Mrs. Lawley, Mrs. Welch, and, more than any, Dr. John Hawkins’ young wife.

John Wesley could never write clearly or understandingly of Beata Hawkins, that gay young woman who sat as it were astonished, staring at him with large eyes, the

first time she heard him preach. She was a pretty woman, with a pretty woman's conceit of herself ; there was about her some curious, provoking charm. Her young face was at times alight with a wild and impish mischief, at times darkened with capricious anger or melancholy. Totally undisciplined, giddy and heedless, she laughed, talked, wept, pouted, sulked, quarrelled, was affectionate or abusive as the mood moved her. Charles, Ingham, and Delamotte fought shy of her, regarding her with distrust. They repeated the gossip they heard from time to time, which was not friendly to her, but John waved it aside. From the first she had an inexplicable fascination for him. In a fatal moment he made up his mind to convert her.

She seemed to be attracted by him. She sought him deliberately. Sitting together in the swaying cabin, or walking up and down the pitching deck, the pretty woman clinging to his arm, he talked, and she listened. He prayed, he gave her endless homilies and advice, and she exhibited a hysterical reaction. In a moment of confidence she explained that her dear mother had died when she herself was only ten. Holding the little girl's hand, the dying woman had murmured :

“ Child, fear God, and though you lose me, you shall never want for a friend ! ” Raising her eyes, Beata clung to John Wesley's arm as if for protection, and whispered :

“ I have now found a friend when I most needed and least expected one ! ”

His heart thrilled with pity, joy, and an inexplicable emotion. She went on sorrowfully, murmuring that perhaps if her dear mother had lived . . . things would have been different. Ah, dear Mr. Wesley, orphaned so young . . . with none to care . . . she had never, until

now, known the power and happiness of religion. . . . She gave him another long look, eloquent with meaning. From that moment his interest in her was fixed, nor could anything his three friends argued change him. She needed him. He was going to save her soul. It was John Wesley's time to walk up Fool Hill.

He was never a flirtatious man—there wasn't humour enough in him for that. But he was a very susceptible man, and the woman was young and pretty. No young and pretty woman can ever come intimately into the life of any man without attracting to herself, more or less, his affections and desires. She colours his thoughts. His instinctive reactions are toward her. Men and roosters share this in common, that they are of all God's creatures the most naturally polygamous.

One morning Mr. John Wesley received a message from Mrs. Lawley, who was just recovering from an illness and wished to see him. She had long desired to receive the Lord's supper, she told him, and to be instructed in the nature of Christianity. Not knowing that the nature of Christianity must ever be foreign to her, Mr. Wesley fixed an hour to give her a daily dose of Law's "Christian Perfection"—of which she would never have a shred.

The Jezebel was bored. There was nothing to do aboard ship, except watch miles upon miles of salt water slipping past, or winter sunrises or sunsets; or one huddled in fear through hours of fiendish storms; or maybe listened weariedly to four young fanatics preaching and praying, or heard unintelligible doleful hymns howled by incomprehensible Germans. Beata Hawkins seemed interested in this Mr. John Wesley, the most personable of the four missionaries. Suppose one caught him and made him more agreeable because more personal? Any-

thing to divert oneself ! He was quite well thought of—and by Mr. Oglethorpe, too.

The languid lady listened to him reading “Christian Perfection,” studied him curiously when his eyes were on the page ; and gratified him by “ seeming to be every day more earnest to pursue the one thing needful.” It gratified him that Beata Hawkins always managed to be in the Lawley cabin during his readings, and was “ always attentive, and more often amazed.”

When Beata in turn fell ill, and must have him read to her while she lay propped up on her pillows, he prayed that Heaven would perfect its work in her, a prayer to which she listened with downcast eyes and folded palms. Clergymen were new to her, and this one aroused her curiosity and piqued her vanity. Hadn’t the man any natural feelings ? To her experience, men were very, very human. She wished, idly enough, to discover for herself just how human this one would prove. He appeared to be troublesomely sincere, he had archaic notions about religion, and his indefatigable zeal made her dizzy at times. But Mr. Oglethorpe respected him, seemed to like him. She had already decided to cultivate Mr. Wesley.

Wesley liked Oglethorpe—with reservations. The soldier was kind, generous, humane, intrepid, but he had traits which Wesley could not but reprove and regret. For instance, Oglethorpe was very much too affable to the women on board, very much too lenient with them and their querulous and often hysterical complaints. His manner to women was too ingratiating, his smile too soft, the light in his eye too unshaded, the effect he produced too obvious to please Mr. Wesley.

The beautiful soldier listened to the priest’s reproofs very much as he listened to the women’s complaints, with

■ tolerant patience. The man of the world perceived that what the sophisticated would smile at as idle gallantries, amusing peccadilloes, set aside as casual affairs of the moment, would appear to this perfervid parson as heinous offences, mortal sins. Once, in the course of private conversation, Oglethorpe had happened to touch upon certain gallant adventures of his own, and Wesley had been horrified. Where the soldier said "adventure" the priest said "adultery." After that confession, as Wesley saw it, James Edward Oglethorpe's private morals had a decidedly gamy savour. Wesley's own morals were unmitigatedly impeccable, but he lacked the humour and the humane discrimination without which even the most exalted virtues must lose somewhat of their social values.

Perhaps the two men were a little sorry for each other. Oglethorpe was not without religion, as he understood it. To his mind, a gentleman believed in and respected God and the King. But he was not always what John Wesley called "open," and the clergyman prayed for him. The priest was so indiscreetly good and honest that the soldier, foreseeing breakers ahead, raised his eyebrows.

"He isn't used to women, that's plain to be seen," mused Mr. Oglethorpe. "Oh, well, every man must learn for himself!" And he smiled charitably.

Mr. Wesley was stalking Mrs. Hawkins' soul with the pertinacity but not the stealth of the tiger in the jungle. Whenever he could find time or opportunity he talked with her seriously, and she affected to listen quite as seriously, for reasons of her own. She had scented higher game, and it occurred to her that she might use the unsuspecting parson as a decoy. Mr. Wesley was, as Mr. Oglethorpe had declared, ■ scholar, a gentleman of great respectability —no tithe-pig parson! He had agreeable manners, and

unusually fine eyes. And she had already discovered his unbelievable credulity. She had learned that she could tell him anything, and he would believe it.

As she became better acquainted with him, she realized that she was in no danger of ever falling in love with Mr. Wesley ; but she wondered if she couldn't make him care a great deal for her. Certainly he was tremendously interested in her welfare, and that, in a way, flattered and gratified her. She was not naturally religious, but she had the catlike quality of adapting herself to her contacts. Wesley's discourses, and very much of his conversation, went over her head ; sometimes, when it didn't bore, it irritated her. He was to all appearances very earnest : but was he, could he be, could any one be, as much in earnest as he seemed ? She could not make herself believe it. *He was a man . . . and so was Oglethorpe. . . .*

She was willing to sample the clergyman for the time being, as a novelty. Who knew what use she might be able to make of him ? She tried on his religion as she might have tried on a new hat or mantle ; if it became her, why not ? When it ceased to interest her, when it didn't jibe with her style or inclinations, why, she could very easily discard it.

He could not get her out of his thoughts. He attached too much importance to her conversion : he *would* convert her ! Ingham, Charles, Delamotte, could say what they would. He knew her better, he said, than any of them.

The sea was horribly rough, the weather stormy for long periods. Ingham and Delamotte were ill, but John proved a good sailor, and this gave him more time to pursue his tireless labours. He spent hours writing his Journal, writing lengthy letters, reading, making notes. He spent hours with the Germans, their simplicity and

goodness astonishing and delighting him more and more. They evidenced a faith hitherto unknown to him, a faith which enabled them to be unafraid of the hardships of life or the fear of death.

During one unusually frightful storm, when a huge wave had broken over the ship and seemed about to swallow it and all aboard, the Germans, who were at their devotions, went on calmly singing. A horrible howling arose from the English passengers, but the voices of the Germans rose clearly above the tumult of wind and sea and the terrors of men. That calm confidence struck John Wesley to the heart. He himself had been in mortal fear.

“ But were you not afraid ? ” he asked one of the Moravians.

“ I thank God, no.”

“ But were not your women and children afraid ? ”

“ Brother, no.” And the German added, with a gentle smile :

“ Our women and children are not afraid to die.”

Women and children . . . not afraid to die ! Wesley had to answer to that. These humble folk had something which he, with all his intellect, his logic, his learning, his fastings, prayers, formulas, rituals, had not attained. They had some emotion of the spirit, some instinct of the heart which he had missed. He was afraid to die. That sea, so ready and willing to devour him, terrified him beyond reason. He was afraid : afraid of life, of death, of God, of circumstances, of men, of women, of himself. In humility of spirit he condemned his own cowardice ; but he could not see his way clear to achieve what he sought.

The ships had been so well victualled, and were so well looked after by Oglethorpe, that there was little sickness, and no deaths—there were, instead, four births. But

there was work enough among the crew and passengers to keep the Holy Club busy. Under John Wesley's rigid discipline they stuck to their inhuman rules. They gave neither Deity nor themselves any respite. They never allowed themselves any recreation : John regarded recreation as a waste of precious time. Blind to the obvious need for relaxation, for some diversion to relieve the strain of too much austerity, friction arose among the four friends, whose bodies were in a state of semi-starvation and whose minds were in a state of auto-intoxication. Their zeal kept the passengers in a chronic state of exasperation. For John wouldn't feed them as babes with the milk of the World ; already he was cramming them with great raw collops of theology, and drenching their unwilling stomachs with the sour wine of High Church formalism. Worse yet, he allowed himself to intrude into the cat-clawings of the women. He hadn't yet learned his own true business nor how to mind it.

That he honestly practiced what he preached made him all the more infuriating, since it left no saving doubt to soften his rigid righteousness. There was no love in him ; only the horrid zest of sacerdotal selfishness which urged him, for the saving of his own soul, to save other souls willynilly. Quite as though there were a bounty on souls, redeemable by Deity. The wonder is that some exasperated sinner didn't quietly heave Mr. Wesley overboard some dark night.

Mrs. Welch, who had been ill all during the voyage, was now taken much worse. An expectant mother, racked with a wretched cough and burning with fever, she lay in a wet and uncomfortable bed, her cabin having been one of those flooded in a severe storm. The woman's deplorable state roused the pity of Oglethorpe, who had her removed into his own cabin and put into his

own bed, ordering a hammock to be slung elsewhere for himself.

Mrs. Welch thought herself at the point of death and felt the need of religious consolation, so John Wesley administered the sacrament and read several psalms. Finding herself in a dry and comfortable bed, the object of care and attention, she began to recover almost immediately. The clergyman visited her daily, to read and pray. Mrs. Hawkins was very often present—and so was Mr. Oglethorpe, both being "much affected."

Things went fairly well until Mrs. Hawkins fell out with Mrs. Lawley and Mrs. Moore, and the three quarrelled rancorously, as could be expected, and Mr. John Wesley thought it his duty as a clergyman of the gospel to reconcile the three vixens. In his innocence and ignorance, he thought he could bring peace because he desired it. It was as if he had spread oil on glowing coals to put out a fire.

Hearing their wives' version of the quarrel, and Mr. Wesley's reproofs to them both, Moore and Lawley were so angry with him that they swore they would henceforth absent themselves from his services. Others were only too willing to follow their example. The spiritual food he had been stuffing the people with had begun to sour on their stomachs, and they were ripe and ready to blame him for the discomfort they experienced.

On the heels of the quarrel, Mrs. Lawley took to her bed, and hearing this, Wesley hoped she might be brought to a milder temper. He prayed with her, and moved as always by his own clear conscience, thought to arouse hers.

"I can't but notice," he told her, fixing upon her the eyes of reproof, "the alteration in your behaviour for the worse since you have become acquainted with Mrs. Moore."

He was remembering Mrs. Moore's abrupt change of heart when she had recovered from her illness, and how immune she was from any least trace of repentance.

" You blame Mrs. Moore and you blame me," cut in Mrs. Lawley resentfully. " But I notice you haven't said one word of blame against Beata Hawkins ! "

" I am not speaking of her faults now, but of yours," said Wesley.

Mrs. Lawley only waited for the ministerial coat-tails to vanish around a corner, before sending for Mrs. Moore and several other friends. The indiscreet parson had made unforgiving enemies.

Even Mrs. Hawkins was angry with him. He had really taken no side in the quarrel, as she knew, merely sought to bring peace. She was so angry that she would not even speak to her husband for two days, venting her tantrum on him. She was shrewd enough to remember that Wesley might be necessary to her purpose for the present, and that it might spoil her plans if she gave vent to her real feelings. It was difficult for the undisciplined vixen to conceal her true nature for any length of time, and the spectacle of her putting up with the humourless minister who plagued her out of her senses with his Serious Call, his Christian Prudence, and his Christian Perfection, is not without irony. He even got at her through the doctor, who solemnly repeated his mentor's words for his wife's spiritual benefit. She could refuse to speak to her husband ; but she had to speak, and with civility, to Wesley, lest Oglethorpe should hear and condemn.

Doctor and Mrs. Hawkins, " between whom some of their neighbours had endeavoured to sow dissension," now explained themselves to each other and came to a thorough reconciliation. Wesley noted it with joy.

The pair couldn't afford to quarrel too openly. They needed each other. Oglethorpe had not really wanted them among his colonists, and only the kindness of his heart had induced him to accept them. But of this John Wesley knew nothing.

The voyage was again delayed, and the sea-weary passengers showed increasing irritability. At this juncture, Mrs. Hawkins one morning called Mr. Wesley aside, and, after some conversation more serious than was usual with her, informed him that she wished to receive the Holy Communion ! *She was saved ! He had won !*

When he ran to tell the other members of the Holy Club the happy news, they cried out upon it. Ingham warned, and the more impetuous Charles protested.

“ You have as little of the wisdom of the serpent as your precious Mrs. Hawkins has of the innocence of the dove ! ” cried Charles.

There were some warm words, almost amounting to a quarrel between the brothers. Even the mild Ingham was provoked. Mark and Phœbe Hird, Betty Hazle, and some others aboard were simple, sincere Christians, they told John. Give such as these the sacrament. But give it to Mrs. Welch and Mrs. Hawkins ? No !

They repeated what they had heard, and what they themselves believed to be true. John refused to be convinced.

He obstinately turned aside all they could say.

That night when he saw Mrs. Hawkins, he told her exactly what he had heard against her : several had warned him of her insincerity and laid many crimes to her charge. . . .

“ She replied so clearly and calmly to every article of the charges, and with such an appearance of innocence as to most particulars, that I could no longer doubt of her

sincere desire to be not only almost but altogether a Christian," he told his friends.

In the teeth of Charles' and Ingham's protests, he gave Mrs. Hawkins the sacrament the next Sunday, and at every opportunity for some time afterward. He entered in his Journal with pious joy :

" The right hand of the Lord still hath the preëminence, the right hand of the Lord bringeth mighty things to pass ! "

Did he really believe he had converted Beata Hawkins ? Or was the wish father to the thought ? Or was it that she attracted him more than he himself knew ? To a temperament like his, sex-attraction was dangerously troublesome. He must repress it, stamp it out, become ■ celibate, a eunuch of the spirit. Sex to him stood for sin, so that when a woman intrigued his imagination and threatened the control which he wished to achieve and maintain over his natural impulses of a man, his immediate reaction was to desire to save her soul, shift his sex-emotion to the religious plane, and thus placate and enlist God, whom he was convinced his natural passions offended, and of whom he was afraid.

If, in the curious, distempered, restless phase through which he was then passing, he had realized the ironic truth, he would probably have taken to a hair shirt, and fled to the solitude of the wilds. As it was, he sought to save himself from the delectable damnation of women by trying to save Beata Hawkins' unsavable soul. Naturally, this made her his implacable enemy. She might trouble him ; she could not corrupt him. There was nothing left to do but hate him.

He could not see that. He was trying with all his heart to be charitable, and it pained him that Charles and Ingham failed to understand. Why should they, how

could they, wish to drive from the table of pardon a fair penitent who intended to lead a new life in peace and pure love? Particularly since this most happy consummation had been brought about by his ministry!

John Wesley had all his life long a curious lack of reticence, an inexplicable obtuseness where delicacy might have been expected in a man so naturally refined and conscientious. If he had taken the world into his confidence where only his own business, feelings, or perplexities were concerned, this failing might not have been so trouble-making. But he took everybody into his confidence about everybody's business, even that which should have been held secret to himself. It was to cost him dear.

Turning from Charles and Ingham, and still harping on the Hawkins affair, he ran to Oglethorpe and took up an hour of that kind man's time discussing a matter to which neither should have given five minutes' consideration. And finding that Oglethorpe had happened to pick up somebody's "Sinner's Complaint to God," and was in a softened mood, he seized the opportunity to remind him of his Italian servant, who had provoked him beyond bearing some time since, and whom he had already forgiven and now had nothing to do but forgive all over again.

In spite of John's overgoodness to her, Mrs. Hawkins was cool to him. That she could deceive him only because of his incorruptible goodness, irritated her unceasingly. Unconsciously, he kept her from making headway in her schemes. With his sardonic innocence, thinking that as "The Sinner's Complaint to God" had had a beneficent effect upon Oglethorpe, it would have a beneficent effect upon others, he fetched the book with him on his visits to the sick Mrs. Welch, and Mrs. Haw-

kins being with her, the two of them had a thumping dose of it. He was nothing if not thorough.

Another storm at night swept down upon the battered vessels, in which the sea broke over the *Simmonds* from stem to stern, burst through the windows of Oglethorpe's cabin in which they were sitting with Mrs. Welch, and all but drowned her. Oglethorpe again had her transferred to his own bed, himself taking a hammock. Wesley suffered his usual terror ; but having been on the go since four o'clock that morning, he lay down in the cabin and fell asleep wondering whether he would wake up alive.

Hardly were they over the first blow, when another storm began, and by the morning it had so increased that they were forced to let the ship drive. He could but say to himself, " How is it, wretch, that thou hast no faith ? " for he was still utterly unwilling to die. Pray as he would, he could not find himself unafraid to die.

About midday, as he stepped out of the great cabin door upon deck, the sea did not break, as usual, with a wild seething rush, but, as it were, gathered itself together compactly and came with a full, smooth tide over the side of the *Simmonds*, which reeled under the impact. In a moment Wesley found himself vaulted over with a thick green wall of water, which pressed down upon him with such stunning force, that he thought himself lost, nor did he think ever to lift up his head again until the sea should give up her dead. The huge comber slipped as smoothly off the sides of the ship as it had come, and, although blinded and drenched, Wesley found himself unhurt. Toward midnight the storm subsided.

" While the calm continued, I endeavoured to prepare myself for another storm. At noon our third storm began. At four it was more violent than any we had had before."

Almost the whole way over, the sorely tried *Simmonds* fought the sea, ran into the skirts of hurricanes, was buffeted by winds and rains and lightnings. Her sails were in ribbons. But whenever came a moment of calm, Wesley resumed his pastoral labours. He sat and talked with Mrs. Welch and her husband in the state cabin, where Oglethorpe's kindness still kept the sick woman, a circumstance which aroused sly gossip and spicy comments. From Mrs. Welch's bedside the clergyman would go to Mrs. Hawkins', who was ill from fright, and who clung to his hand like a child.

And then came the welcome news that the long, desperate voyage was indeed coming to an end. On the noon of Wednesday the fourth of February, a clear and sunny day, the tall trees of Georgia were visible from the mast, and in the afternoon from the main deck. The next morning they were in the Savannah River, and cast anchor near Tybee Island, in a country which wore the bloom of Spring in the depths of Winter.

On Friday, February sixth, about eight in the morning, John Wesley first set foot on American ground.

CHAPTER III

GEORGIA

IF it had not been that he heard all around him the familiar accents of his native speech, saw English faces, felt the impact of English vices and virtues, John Wesley might have fancied himself upon another planet.

It was February : such a February as neither he nor his friends had ever known ; as if, leaving behind them storms and stress and the weary tumult of the winter seas, they had dropped anchor in some happy haven of the Isles of the Blest. They had come up a golden river flowing between low-lying shores fringed with plumpy palms, with here and there the darker green of giant oaks, and pines, and glorious magnolias nodding their high heads against a cobalt sky. Gradually the river banks rose to a bold bluff, beyond which spread a flat country . . . “ the fairest, pleasantest, and fruitfullest of all the worlde, abounding in honie, venison, wilde foule, forests, woodes of all sortes, Palm-trees, Cypresse and Cedars, Bayes ye highest & greatest . . . and the sight of the faire medowes is a pleasure not to be exprest with Tongue. Also there bee Conies & Hares, Silk Wormes in merveilous number, a great deale fairer & better than bee our Silk Wormes. To be short, it is ■ thing unspeakable to consider the things that be seene there and shall be founde more & more in this incomperable land, which, never yett broken with plough yrons, bringeth forth al things according to his first nature wherewith the eternall God imbued it.”

So, down the “glorious rivers that were Boyling and Roaring through the multitude of all kindes of Fish” they came to that “incomperable” country of immense trees. Uncountable birds, land birds and water birds and birds that seemed to be both at once, filled the world with wings. A warm sun poured down upon the coast country and drew from it the incense of myrtles and bays and sassafras, of cedars and pines, mingled with the saline breath of the marshes and the sea. All the colours of this new world were exquisitely clear and vivid, as if only that morning brushed and burnt in. The atmosphere had a luminous purity, a clean, sharp savour, as if man had never yet breathed into it any taint of mortality.

Beautiful little Savannah, perched on the brow of the high bluff with the river curving at her feet, seemed to the optimistic eyes of John Wesley friendly and promising. Many houses were up, more were building. The gardens were thriving. Everything promised plenty. The people who greeted him so cordially seemed to him good and happy. And of the Indians he had not seen enough to dampen his ardour and dispel his illusions. He shared the curious notions of his age as to the Indians, picturing them as childlike souls panting for conversion, and with no preconceived errors of doctrine to keep them from ardently embracing the faith once delivered to the saints —his faith. They were clean, empty vessels into which should foam the pure milk of the Word. So he came to Georgia with his heart singing hymns in his breast.

Unfortunately, his position and duties were indefinite, his parish without fixed limits. Half a dozen trifling villages were within a dozen miles of Savannah. The Salzburgers had established Ebenezer further up the river, the Scots were at Darien, a hundred miles away. On St. Simon’s Island Oglethorpe was weaving his rope

of sand, laying out the little outpost which was to enable him to win all Georgia from Spain ; calling it, ironically enough, Frederica, in honour of that innocuous prince whose sole claim to remembrance is that he begot a king who was to lose all America for England.

When Oglethorpe left the two emigrant ships at Tybee, he commissioned John Wesley to look after the people left there to await his return from St. Simon's, whither he had conducted the first party of colonists. The ingenious South Carolina settlers grabbed the chance to do some rum-running, with the result that Wesley found himself with a drunken crew and passengers on his hands. His first official act in America was, immediately upon Oglethorpe's return, to aid in staving in casks of liquor.

The enraged rum-runners saw the sands of Tybee drinking their goods without paying for them, and revenged themselves by frightening the settlers out of their wits with ghastly details of outrage and massacre by Spaniards and Indians upon all who venture so far south as Frederica. The Germans, in particular, were so alarmed that they begged Oglethorpe to send them to their brethren at Ebenezer and Savannah ; and he saw his best settlers lost to Frederica, where they were most needed. Only Captain Hermsdorf, a singing, praying fellow fit to have been one of Oliver's Ironsides, stood by his chief. Where Oglethorpe went, Hermsdorf, worth a regiment in himself, would go, and take a few of his followers with him.

And when the Highlanders at Darien heard the threats of battle, murder and sudden death, they laughed like hyenas. Used to fighting their barelegged brother Scots, mailed Spanish soldiers and painted Indian warriors meant precious little to the gentle Caledonians. The

sons of the old fighting clans crooked their bony knees and turkey-cocked in their plaids.

"If they use us ill," said the Scots, hopefully, "we'll aye drrive them out of theirr forrts and so have houses rready buildit forr oursels to live in!"

Georgia wasn't altogether defenceless : the Highlanders were on the border.

Though the defection of the Germans was a serious blow to Oglethorpe, his letting them settle among their brethren at Savannah was such joyful news to John Wesley, that it seemed to him the Lord Himself had arranged it for his special benefit.

He had had a memorable meeting with the Moravian minister, Spangenberg, when that good man came from Savannah to welcome the brethren on the *Simmonds*. Spangenberg's faith and practices seemed to John Wesley agreeable to the plan of the first ages, his whole character apostolic. If he had remained in Georgia, things must have gone very differently with the Wesleys.

"Mr. Spangenberg," said John Wesley, "I am going to ask for your advice, in regard to myself, and to my conduct." And he gave the German certain details.

"I can tell you nothing," said the other, seriously, "until I have first asked you two or three questions."

"I will answer you as truthfully as I can."

The German leaned forward, and fixing his eyes upon the younger man, asked with directness and sincerity :

"Do you know yourself ? Have you the witness within yourself ? Does the Spirit of God bear witness with your spirit that you are the child of God ? "

The Englishman was profoundly astonished. He did not know what to answer, and so remained silent. Observing his astonishment, Spangenberg asked, never shifting his piercing glance :

“Do you know Jesus Christ?”

After a long pause, Wesley replied in a voice which trembled slightly : “ I know he is the saviour of the world.”

“ True,” said Spangenberg, quietly. “ But do you know he has died to save *you* ? ”

“ I hope he has died to save me,” said Wesley, after another long pause.

Spangenberg regarded him searchingly.

“ Do you know yourself ? ” he asked once more, significantly.

“ I do,” but John Wesley was afraid these were idle words ; and he knew that Spangenberg thought so, too. Had this apostolic old man been sent him in a critical moment to change the course of his thoughts ? Was he come to put the seal upon the work commenced on the *Simmonds*, in the midst of the sea’s fury ?

Wesley was startled, stirred. He had had a glimpse of Something, when the Germans sang undisturbed in the face of death. David Nitschman had helped him. Now Spangenberg asked him almost childishly simple questions—and he could not find ready answers. Did he know himself ? He couldn’t answer, for he didn’t know. The best he could do was to cling to ancient formulas, to bang himself and others about the head with the thigh-bones of the fathers.

Having asked everybody else’s advice about Mrs. Hawkins, he now asked Spangenberg’s. Seeing her almost daily, she had completely obsessed his thoughts. He had long, grave talks with her. He had long, intimate walks with her, in the clear February sunlight. She talked to the fiercely celibate young man in her wheedling soft voice, beseeching him to help her save her soul ; she looked at him with eyes as clear as a child’s, smiled at

him with her red mouth, walked beside him on the golden Tybee sands, the winds billowing her garments about her shapely body. She was a woman who must always appeal to men's senses. But he simply couldn't realize her appeal to his. He only knew he had to save her soul.

The other members of the Holy Club looked on with consternation mingled with fury, their patience all but exhausted. Charles talked in no uncertain terms, Ingham expostulated with unusual warmth, Delamotte prayed. They disagreed with John violently, and he told them gently but firmly that they didn't understand. They declared vehemently that he himself didn't understand, and the infatuated man saw himself crossed by his nearest and dearest, saw himself suffering like a martyr for the truth's, for Christ's sake. Wasn't his sole desire the salvation of the woman's soul? It seemed to him that he saw her almost visibly set upon by the powers of darkness—and he couldn't make the others comprehend.

He would write in his diary: "*Talked seriously with Mrs. Hawkins. She affected.*" But the moment his back was turned, his eye no longer upon her, as if shaking off an intolerable weight she would turn light and giddy, be so obviously her old self, that when he became aware of it, expostulated with her and found her cold, he would write, with painful heaviness of heart: "*Talked to Mrs. H. Got no good!*"

Spangenberg listened to John Wesley talking about Beata Hawkins, reflected for a moment, and then said with simple wisdom:

"My dear brother, I believe our old friend Thomas a Kempis advises well: 'Be not familiar with any woman—but in general commend all good women to God.'"

And Wesley said it was good advice and he would try to follow it.

The Indians, on whose account they had come to America, came to see the new white medicine men—the old Mico, Tomochichi, his face painted red, his hair decorated with beads, a scarlet feather in his ear, his tall body wrapped around with a blanket, the straight folds of which fell to his heels and gave his erect form and fine grave visage something of the aspect of an ancient Roman ; his wife Sinaukee, in disfiguring English dress ; some other women in coarse cotton robes, and with braided hair over their shoulders. Sinaukee brought the missionaries a jar of milk and a jar of honey and told them she hoped that when they spoke to her people they would feed them with milk, for they were as little children ; and be as sweet in their words as honey towards them. Old Tomochichi spoke gently and wisely in his sweet and resonant voice, the half-breed woman Mary Musgrove, the official interpreter, translating.

This was the Holy Club's first contact with the red men they had come out to convert—and didn't. Wesley never had any closer contact with them. When Tomochichi was urged to become a Christian, the fine old Mico said vehemently :

“ Why, those are Christians at Savannah ! Those are Christians at Frederica ! Christians lie ! Christians steal ! Christians beat men ! Me no Christian ! ”

And Wesley had to admit, later, that he had never heard of a single Indian in all America who had the least wish to be converted.

He had wished to make his first pastoral call in Georgia upon the Indians, and at three-thirty in the morning he rose from his bed on the ground, and a couple of hours later found him and Charles on the Savannah River, rowing toward the Indian village in the teeth of a hard gale. The chief and his wife being absent, Wesley stopped in

Savannah and waited upon the Chief Magistrate, Mr. Thomas Causton. Not being able to foresee the future, neither said to the other, "*Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?*"

Mr. Thomas Causton had accompanied Oglethorpe on his first voyage to Georgia, and having become as it were grand vizier in Savannah, was already in flourishing circumstances, having by far the most commodious house in town, as well as a handsome estate in the country.

He welcomed the Wesleys cordially. The shrewd and worldly magistrate understood well enough the restraining force of religion in the colony, which needed a firm hand. He respected Wesley's position, his breeding, and his forceful character. For religion in itself he cared little, though he valued it highly as a convention, a useful and necessary appanage to the civil power. He reflected with satisfaction, that he could look for intelligent aid from the Oxford clergyman whom the Trustees had sent out.

Mr. Causton made a very favourable impression on his visitors, who had a trained respect for vested authority. The Wesleys enjoyed their visit. The house was comfortable, the host affable. To add to their pleasure, Spangenberg presently arrived, and after him Mr. Herbert, the rector, whose place John Wesley was to fill.

While they were talking, the door was quietly opened, and a young girl looked in for a moment—a tall, pale, slender girl, with a gentle and serious face. She was plainly dressed, and she moved with a sort of gliding grace. Seeing several gentlemen with her uncle, and two of them strangers, she bowed modestly and withdrew.

"One of your new parishioners, Mr. Wesley," said Mr. Causton. "My wife's niece, Sophy Hopkey."

"A young lady as good as she is pretty," put in Mr. Herbert. "Miss Sophy has been good enough to assist me at times with the parish work, Mr. Wesley, and I am sure you, too, will find her both kind and helpful. She is truly religious."

"A good lass, our Sophy. Too timid and soft-hearted, perhaps, and Mrs. Causton says the girl likes to be on her knees overmuch, but that's natural enough in a young girl," said Mr. Causton, with a smile.

"The soul's natural position is on its knees," said John Wesley gravely. And turning to Spangenberg he began to talk again about the Brethren, dismissing Miss Sophy Hopkey, whom he had glimpsed but had not met, from his mind from the time being. He did not know that Sophy's eyes were for him the eyes of destiny.

The parsonage not being as yet ready for them, Wesley and Delamotte gladly took up their quarters with the Germans. Day by day Wesley could observe the whole behaviour of the Moravians, and their other-worldliness held up before his eager eyes a perfection impossible to maintain for any length of time in a modern age. It made his opinion of his own people harsher and his attitude sterner than it should have been. He could love and understand the Germans, who had won to a spiritual strength which could convert him by its own fire of faith. It was impossible for him to love or to understand the English colonists, for the simple reason that, immersed as they were in a life-and-death struggle for existence in this world, he couldn't win them to his way of thinking about the next.

He was restless and perturbed. He wasn't able to take up actual work in Savannah as yet, and spent most of his time between the Moravians and the ships, which still lay off Tybee.

Beata Hawkins had not yet gone to Frederica, and she didn't want to go to Frederica . . . a little savage hole in the woods . . . a place where one was in constant danger of one's life . . . a horrible place. It didn't even offer the social advantages of Savannah, meagre as those might be. Savannah had at least a few gay people. But at Frederica . . . with her dear husband the doctor always present . . . and Mr. Oglethorpe away, as he must be very often . . . and with Charles Wesley, who didn't like her, installed as pastor, she saw nothing but devastating dullness. Reacting from the frightful voyage, she was nervous, weary and exasperated, and her volatile nature took on a sort of hysterical melancholy which looked almost like settled despair to one who didn't know her.

It almost distracted John Wesley to see her thus. He tried to talk to her, but in her deep melancholy she would not speak—just sat there and looked at him with her large mournful eyes, heavy as from tears and sleeplessness. He turned again to Charles and Delamotte, and they had to join in prayers for her. He went after Dr. Hawkins, and her husband, too, had to pray for her. Again Beata Hawkins was able to obsess the mind and conscience of John Wesley. When he retired for private prayer now, it was to meditate on her case.

He talked it over with his convert Mark Hird, a truly good man. He ran to Oglethorpe and talked it over with him—but the soldier couldn't guess what ailed the lady. It was midnight before his troubled reflections on the sad case of Mrs. Hawkins allowed John Wesley to sleep. He seemed to have caught a sort of hysteria from hers.

When he posted his diary, the day's first entry concerned her :

“ Sung ; prayed for Mrs. Hawkins.” “ Wrote confer-

ence with Mrs. Hawkins." "Conversed with Mrs. Hawkins. She deeply afflicted."

Spangenberg came from Savannah to Tybee to bid his young friend farewell. In that parting hour, what did Wesley talk about? Mrs. Hawkins.

The old apostle listened with his fatherly face full of concern. To him the woman was a soul bound by Satan, and to be saved if possible; but—she was a woman, therefore not to be too much talked with. He reminded Wesley that he mustn't talk with her too much. But, being Spangenberg, he couldn't find it in his heart to condemn her.

"Friend, I hope for her," he said. But he would add no further word.

Wesley's last entry as he posted his diary for that day:

"Conversed with Mrs. Hawkins and Mrs. Welch. Mrs. Hawkins in a fever, mild, but utterly inconsolable. Took solemn leave."

She must have enjoyed herself tremendously. At last she had him where she wanted him. She could not corrupt him; but she could torment and deceive him, she could make him believe anything. Having discovered his mile-wide streak of credulity, she played upon it, clumsily, but effectively. It was at that time that the crude plot, which was to prove almost fatal to Oglethorpe and the Wesleys, began to take shape in her unbalanced mind. She had a passion for Oglethorpe. She cared nothing for Charles; but sensing in John an obstacle and barrier, she hated and meant to remove him from her path.

On the day of her departure for Frederica—for she was really going to that howling wilderness at last—John Wesley rose at three-thirty, and dressed for a day of nineteen hours, a day without food or rest. First he prayed for Mrs. Hawkins. At four he sat down and wrote a

second conference. At five, still fasting, he talked, sang, prayed. At six he "talked with Mrs. Hawkins. She mild, but sad. I hope for her." At seven he "conversed with Mrs. Hawkins." "They took boat. Prayed for them. She softened."

For an hour after their departure he prayed and meditated. It was only when the sail was long out of sight that he could bring himself to turn to other business.

CHAPTER IV

THE COMING OF SOPHY

AT that time the clock of his life stood at a quarter past three. He was a beautiful little man, under the medium height like all the Wesleys, very slender and spare of body, but so justly proportioned that his lack of height wore the aspect of an added grace. In company with larger men, he compared as might a rapier against a sword. He wore his dark hair rather long, curling slightly at the ends, and brushed to a burnished glossiness. His large, dark-blue eyes had that clear cold light which expresses will and the autocratic intellect ; for he had not yet attained the sweet patience which made his later years so gracious. In his ascetic and intellectual face, one feature alone did not jibe with the rest ; the firm chin was cleft. Unexpectedly, delightfully, as if Ariel had lightly touched the chin of the Sphinx and left a baffling, fairy fingerprint, John Wesley's chin was cleft.

The precision of his mind expressed itself in a sort of austere dandyism. He could bear nothing out of order, nothing amiss, nothing careless. His clothes—of which his supply was just sufficient to his needs—were spinsterishly neat. His hand was fine, nervous, delicate, very strong, like all perfectly made things, his leg in its plain hose very shapely. And nothing—not the macerating fasts, the merciless hours, the terrific strain, the strenuous endless labour, nor the inhuman exposure to all sorts of weather, to which he exposed himself, ever marred the

beauty of his complexion, which had the pure freshness of a young child's. He had the strength of tested steel : he could stand fatigues and overstrains which would have killed a stronger man.

Used to the society of elegant and accomplished women, his manners had the incommunicable simplicity of fine art : it had taken generations to produce the polished naturalness of John Wesley. In the phase through which he was now passing, to this agreeable manner had been added a sort of eager expectancy, as though in each new acquaintance he longed and hope to meet, perhaps, an angel unawares ; or maybe by the grace of God a lamp to throw light upon the rough path ahead. How could one tell ?

Such was John Wesley on that bright Saturday morning when Magistrate Thomas Causton introduced him to Mrs. Causton's niece, Miss Sophy Hopkey, and her friend Miss Fossett. He noticed at once how mild, how unassuming the two girls were ; and that of the two the younger girl was the fairer.

You thought her pretty when you met her. You thought her beautiful when you knew her. She was in the first flower of her youth, a tall and very slender girl topping John Wesley by the head, a girl whose quiet loveliness embodied as it were the freshness of an April morning softly shadowed by clouds. Her light brown hair was full of gold, her eyes a clear hazel, her lips a pink, sweet curve, soft lips at once innocent and very provocative, the lips of a woman born to be loved. She did not know how to move without grace, nor to speak but in a low, soft voice.

Because of her height, and slenderness, and unusual grace of bearing, she might be called distinguished ; but that was too cold a word to express her soft appeal. She

stole gently into the heart, with no attempt to command or cajole. There was intellect in the clear brow, and when the veiled glance lifted, the hazel eyes were full of light. She wore her plain dress with a simple elegance that impressed the fastidious Wesley ; in person she compared more than favourably with Varanese, with Selima, nay, even with Aspasia ; and he thought that, if she had had their opportunity, she had compared favourably with them intellectually.

She pleased him at sight. The two touched hands, and bowed, murmuring the usual polite commonplaces. Baron von Reck being present, Mr. Wesley was too intent upon the conversation of the German concerning the Salzburgers and their settlement at Ebenezer, to give much more than passing attention to Miss Sophy Hopkey and her friend Miss Fossett. Nevertheless, from the moment his eyes met Sophy's, she stayed in his mind.

And he stayed in Sophy's. It did not pique her that so superior a person as Mr. Wesley did not pay very much attention to her. His personal dignity, the position he occupied, his favour with Oglethorpe, the deference paid him by Von Reck and her uncle, made him appear for the moment older than he was, so that she looked up to him with the candid and timid respect of a young girl. She was little more than a child, but at the same time a very intelligent child.

The next morning, when Mr. Quincy preached, and Mr. Wesley assisted in giving the Eucharist, Miss Sophy was one of the communicants, as Mr. Wesley carefully set down in his diary for that day. Was not the morning more golden, the divine services more divine, his heart happier, when for the first time the young priest gave Sophy the Bread of Life ? So, at that Table, she came definitely into John Wesley's life.

She was at an age when, like many young girls, her emotions, her enthusiasms, naturally inclined her toward the religious life . . . particularly when a young and handsome clergyman fascinated her imagination. A further incentive was her unhappiness at home, her aunt being of a worldly nature and a shrewish temper, her uncle a man she feared rather than loved. In the background, darkening Sophy's sky, was young Tom Mellichamp. Tommy was her first lover, and first lovers, good or ill, have always to be carefully considered.

The young man's mother was a widow, who, with her son, had come out to the Colony with the Caustons. Mrs. Mellichamp was a mild and gentle soul, but her son was wild and reckless, of a headlong, improvident, furious temper, over which he seemed to have no control. He made no attempt to check his passions. The world was his oyster, to be opened by whatever tool was handiest. "Poor Tommy" was very much of a scamp—and he had the scamp's appeal to women. His mother adored him, and had come to Georgia on his account, preferring a hut in the wilderness for herself, if thereby she could keep Tommy out of Newgate at home.

Tom had fallen in love with Sophy at sight, with all the reckless abandon of his nature. He loved her; he wanted her; therefore, she must be his. His was the natural, simple reasoning of the male creature. He swore he would have her. That the young girl had told him she did not love him in return, made no difference. *He loved her.* That was sufficient.

"Do you love anybody else?" he demanded, truculently.

"N-no." His violence frightened Sophy.

"Has anybody else asked your uncle for your hand?"

"No." She breathed a sigh of relief at that.

"They had better not! Anybody else but me had better keep away from you," said young Tom Mellichamp ominously. "You belong to me, Sophy, whether you will or no. I am in love with you. I am going to have you, and if by any chance anybody else cuts in ahead of me, you will be a widow. Or he will be a widower. One of the two." He added, with a dark look, which terrified her even more: "You had better not forget."

She was not likely to forget. Knowing something of his recklessness, she dreaded possible violence. She could vision herself slain by Tommy in a fit of anger, and her teeth chattered at the notion. She did not think she could expect any real support from her uncle—he did not wish to be worried by her affairs. Causton did not care greatly for her happiness; he would use her as a pawn. He was not unkind or heartless, but he was greedy to advance himself in the Colony, and he most certainly would not let Sophy's happiness or unhappiness interfere with his plans. Her aunt would scold and rail. She was a selfish woman, and she wished to see her niece married and off her hands. Mellichamp was a handsome young man, and of a family much better than the generality of those which made up the Colony. He was violent, of course; but in a new country what did that amount to? It might even be turned to account. So long as nothing really serious could be alleged against him, he would not be forbidden the house.

Sophy had to see and hear and know things that made her profoundly unhappy under that roof. Set between the cold worldliness of her relatives and the savage passion of Mellichamp, how could she be anything but unhappy? And at this juncture, when religion alone offered the consolation she craved, came John Wesley.

Sometimes the young girl met him in company with

his friend, Mr. Charles Delamotte, a comely and wellborn young man nearer her own age by ten years than was John Wesley. Delamotte was the son of a London merchant and from a worldly point of view his prospects were better than his friends'. He was pleasant, though diffident. Sophy wondered why she couldn't like him ?

That he loved and revered Mr. Wesley was plain to be seen. And he was patient, and modest, and diligent in all good works. Honest and loyal, he would have gone through fire for Wesley. Seeing them together, one called to mind David and Jonathan. Why, then, Sophy asked herself, wasn't she drawn to Mr. Wesley's assistant ?

The two had at last taken possession of the parsonage, a big barracks of a house, very sparsely furnished, but, like Wesley, always in perfect order. There were more books in the parsonage, Miss Fossett said, than in all the rest of Georgia. And there was a large garden, in which many native trees and shrubs had been left standing, and to which many English plants had been added. In that rich soil everything grew to perfection. Though neglected when Wesley took it over, under his care it was already a bower of greenness and coolness, of birds and bees and blossoms. He had tackled it with joy, trimming, pruning, planting, putting an arbour here, a seat there. John Wesley was happy and at home in his Savannah garden.

As she got to know him better, the amount of work he did staggered Sophy. He was tireless. He liked to work. She liked to sit, her hands idle in her lap, and day-dream. What had the future in store for her ? What was to be her fate, in this motley little town ? She was not vain—her training had kept her humble-minded—but there were few in Savannah upon whom she could look with eyes of favour, or think, secretly, as a young girl does, that if this

or that particular young man should find her fair . . . She was superior to most in the colony. That was one reason why she had appealed so instantly to John Wesley.

As much as she could, now, she avoided Tom Mellichamp. He had wrung from her, in a moment of fear, a tentative promise.

“ You haven’t forgotten what I told you, have you ? ”

“ No,” said the trembling girl.

“ Will you agree to marry me now ? ”

“ Tommy, I’m sorry . . . but I can’t.” And she added, “ I—don’t love you like that, Tommy. I’m sorry . . . but I don’t.”

“ I’ve heard all that before. If you won’t promise to marry me, then you shall promise to marry no one else. Or there’ll be a funeral instead of a wedding. Yours or whoever dares seek you. Maybe both. I mean it, Sophy.” And, with a wild look, he asked : “ Well ? What have you got to say ? ”

“ What can I say, Tommy, except that it is horrible of you to fright me so ? ” she asked indignantly.

“ You can say that if you won’t marry me you promise to marry none else.” And he seized her by the arm, bringing his handsome, evil face closer to hers. He looked capable of any violence, and Sophy panted with terror.

She was heart-free. Love was far-off at that moment of fear.

“ I’m waiting : will you agree ? ”

“ Yes,” breathed Sophy.

“ All right,” said he, releasing her. “ That binds you. You can’t marry anybody else because you belong to *me*.”

So the matter stood. She did not love him, and from the hour of her meeting John Wesley, she knew that she could never marry Mellichamp. Compared with

Wesley's quiet, vital force, how futile, how stupid, poor wild Tommy's arrogance and violence appeared !

Wesley had begun to hold services at six o'clock in the morning, and Sophy and Miss Fossett became regular attendants. After prayers they walked home with the clergyman, in the freshness of the Spring mornings. The trees along the sandy streets—Savannah was a bower of trees—were in bright new green, every garden was gay with budding bushes. Wild wistaria clambered up the great pines, shaking down showers of amethysts ; the last jessamines were swinging their golden bells ; and there was the glory of the Cherokee rose, the pride of Spring in Georgia.

John Wesley walked with the two girls who were also in the springtime of life, and who turned their faces to him, listening to his words as to Deity speaking. Without so much as a by your leave, his heart turned to Sophy.

Sophy was secretly proud that Miss Fossett thought so highly of the minister. She respected Miss Fossett's intelligence. Miss Fossett wasn't one who bestowed her esteem lightly nor withdrew her affection easily. The liking that both girls felt for John Wesley drew them into an even closer friendship. When Miss Fossett said anxiously that she feared Mr. Wesley worked too hard, fasted too much, and that she thought his friends ought to see that he took better care of his health, Sophy felt oddly grateful to her. Dear Miss Fossett ! What a perfect friend she was !

One morning Mrs. Mellichamp came to the parsonage, deeply troubled, to talk to her pastor about her poor dear Tommy. She was a widow, and he was her only son. He wasn't bad, but only wild. And now he had gotten himself in trouble, and was put in prison, poor lad, just for some little misdemeanors. Wouldn't Mr. Wesley go

to see him, as his pastor, and have a talk with him ? Tommy was headstrong, but he had a good heart. And would Mr. Wesley see the Governor about the matter and make him understand ?

She sat there, twisting her fingers ; then looked up, with tears trickling down her cheeks.

“ The worst of it’s about Miss Sophy,” she said wretchedly. “ Tom’s that mad about that girl that he’s a bit desperate, and *she* doesn’t seem to know her own mind—or at least Mr. Causton and his wife haven’t given her instructions yet what she’s to do. She’s dependent upon them and must e’en do as they bid her. It fair drives poor Tommy wild.”

“ Your son wishes to marry Miss Sophy ? ”

“ Wishes ? Nay sir, he’s determined on’t.”

“ But surely,” said Wesley, “ he can’t be determined upon it unless Miss Sophy agrees with him.”

“ Nay again, Mr. Wesley. Tommy says she shall have him or none. He won’t bear letting any one else have her if he can’t have her himself, and so he’s told her. And he’s that wild and headstrong— Ah, Mr. Wesley, I’ve seen a great deal of trouble and sorrow in this world ! I need your prayers ! ”

“ You shall have them,” said the minister, gravely. “ And so shall your son.”

“ And you’ll see the Governor, Mr. Wesley ? Sure, he’ll listen to you if to none else.”

“ On the first proper occasion, I will tell Mr. Oglethorpe what you have told me,” said her pastor, after a pause. And Mr. Causton being at that moment announced, Mrs. Mellichamp was forced to take her departure, leaving Wesley more disturbed than he liked. This was the first he had heard of the matter. Mellichamp—*Mellichamp* !—marry Sophy ! She, so soft, so sweet, so

gentle, so tender—for now he knew she was all this—forced into marriage with some one so totally unsuited to her ! It made him unhappy even to think of such a possibility. The very idea of it was preposterous.

In the course of conversation with Mr. Causton, he hinted somewhat of Mrs. Mellichamp's remarks. Who said shortly :

“ Tommy wants to marry Sophy ? Of course he wants to marry her ! But *I* shall have something to say to that, I warrant ye ! ”

March was merging into April. Wesley had gotten into the full swing of his parochial duties. His people appeared content, his dear Germans were at hand for sympathy and help, his conscience was at peace, he was putting long-cherished plans into practice. The one thing that troubled his heart was the painful doubt he entertained against Oglethorpe. He doubted the soundness of his religion. And he feared there couldn't be any doubt at all as to the unsoundness of his morals. What Oglethorpe had told him so lightly, so carelessly, aboard the *Simmonds*, stayed in Wesley's mind to trouble him. But for once he managed to keep his doubts to himself, and whenever he could he worked for the Governor with all his might. The two were, to all appearances, good friends. And then one evening Benjamen Ingham suddenly appeared, with a letter from Charles, and what he told John and Delamotte that night was so momentous that the three felt that nothing but fasting and prayer would drive that sort out.

“ The next day Mr. Delamotte and I began to try whether life might not as well be sustained by one sort as by a variety of food. We chose to make the experiment with bread · and were never more healthy

than when we tasted nothing else. Blessed are the pure in heart!"

What he meant was that he and Delamotte were going on a long and hard fast, eating nothing but dry bread and drinking nothing but water. This, in addition to the Wednesday and Friday fasts to which the Holy Club had long since bound themselves. And this, too, although their pastor's extreme abstemiousness had already been noticed and commented upon unfavourably by his parishioners, who saw in it a marked reproof to themselves. Indeed, Oglethorpe had already said to him bluntly :

"I am asking you to dine with me, Mr. Wesley. There are some here who take a wrong impression of your abstemiousness. They think you hold the eating of meat and the drinking of wine to be unlawful. May I beg you to convince them of the contrary?"

"But I have never said it was unlawful to any one," protested Wesley.

"May I beg you to convince them of that?" Oglethorpe wished to preserve amity, and Mr. Wesley's extreme views were not conducive to that end. He was already beginning to be criticised, and the Governor wished to still these whispers, that the pastor's influence might not be lessened.

Wesley agreed to obey what he considered an order. At dinner he took a little wine, and ate a little meat. His mind abhorring and rejecting both, his stomach took its orders from his mind, and he fell ill for some five days. So that now a fast of dry bread and water was not so difficult to him as to others.

Ingham's news was that Charles was in desperate case, ill, neglected, his life in danger; maybe before John could reach Frederica, this beloved brother might be no more. Owing to adverse winds, John could not set out

immediately. He was racked with anxiety, which he sought to relieve by prayer and hymns, and by carrying on his accustomed round of duties. Inwardly a turmoil, outwardly serene, he wrote his letters, read his books, preached, visited, received visitors, wrote in his Journal for a couple of hours, sang his hymns.

He walked in his garden with Sophy and Miss Fossett, and their company soothed him inexpressibly. A garden, and the gentle companionship of women. These were the two deep, unchanging needs of his life. When the girls left, he opened his Greek testament. The while the face of his brother rose before his mind's eye, he dropped on his knees to pray, not only for Charles, but for James Oglethorpe and Beata Hawkins.

CHAPTER V

WILD WOMEN

WHEN Charles Wesley came out of his palmetto hut on the river shore at Frederica, he looked upon a world of marsh, an illimitable plain tied to the farthest blue horizon by the silver thread of waters ; of sea island shores shimmering in the sun-haze ; and, southward, the vast barrier of unbroken forest. It was a most beautiful world in which he had been set down ; and moved by the strangeness of his surroundings, he began his duties in a state of high exaltation. He had here, he thought, a great mission, and he resolved to fulfill it in the manner of the ancient Church. In Frederica was to reign as it were a perpetual Sabbath. Its people were to pursue undeviating devotions, putting away the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Oglethorpe wanted a colony for England, as against Spain. The colonists wanted everything they could get, including ease and pleasure. The Holy Club wanted a theocratic State, with God as Governor, John Wesley as Grand Vizier, and Charles, Ingham and Delamotte as Chief Deputies. These diverging aims brought them all one thing in common : Trouble.

Among Charles' new parishioners were Mrs. Hawkins and her husband, the settlement's surgeon, the wily Mrs. Welch, and the even wilier Lawleys. They alone would have made discord inevitable. Charles Wesley never sidetracked trouble ; he pitchforked himself into the thick of it at the first opportunity.

He began action by catching Mrs. Welch at the door of the women's tent, which Oglethorpe, to protect them in case of sudden emergency, had had pitched near his own. Charles hadn't been quite satisfied with Mrs. Welch's conduct of late ; he thought it betrayed a levity against which he must warn her. She listened coldly to the lecture he read her.

" I beg and beseech you to be on your guard against the cares and snares of the world," he finished. " Don't let it lure you into light company and foolish levity. Rather give yourself completely to Heaven in the Christian sacrifice."

" Snares of the world—light company—levity—*here* ! " she exclaimed, looking at him with astonishment and irritation. " La, sir, you are pleased to be ironical ! " And of a sudden she burst out laughing in his face.

" God is not pleased to add weight to my words now," he said sorrowfully. " But I will persevere."

And he went home and prayed for her. He had been deeply interested in the pretty young woman since their meeting on the *Simmonds*. There was a holy rivalry between him and John as to the merits of their dear converts, and Charles meant to keep a watchful eye upon his. Presently, hearing that she had quarrelled with Mrs. Hawkins, he went after her and tried to bring about a reconciliation.

" You must make up with her—'tis your plain duty," he told Mrs. Welch. " She bears you no ill-will—none in the world."

" Don't try to tell me anything like that ! " exclaimed Mrs. Welch angrily. " Beata Hawkins is a very sly woman. I understand her perfectly. You don't ! " She gave him a darkly significant look.

" What do you mean ? " he asked, staring at her.

For a moment she appeared to hesitate. Then coming closer, she said in a whisper :

“ There’s a great man in the case. For that reason I can’t talk out—you can understand why, Mr. Wesley ! But I’ll tell you this much : she is very jealous of me.”

Others coming in, she could say no more at the time ; but she had said quite enough to startle him. A jealous woman, quarrelling with a possible rival. A great man in the case. *Oglethorpe* ?

Vague suspicions began of a sudden to take more definite shape. The happenings on the *Simmonds*. The quality of the gallant soldier’s patience with these women . . . particularly Mrs. Welch. His apparent weakness where they were concerned . . . particularly Mrs. Hawkins. Little incidents Charles had observed, or John had commented on. All these small things came back to his mind now. Gossip that he had heard here in Frederica. Ah, John had been right in thinking that Oglethorpe was but a weak brother where the female sex was concerned, and that his principles were not at all what they should be.

If Mrs. Welch meant what he suspected she meant, how was he, as a pastor, to proceed ? How was he to save these poor women ? He reflected that, even at the risk of antagonizing the great man in the case, he must do his duty. And so he called his flock out betimes in the wild March mornings, sometimes in the pouring rain, and gave them the full church services for the good of their scrubby souls. And he kept behind Mrs. Welch like a beatified bailiff.

One morning, meeting Mrs. Hawkins’ maid Catherine running crying down the street, he stopped her to discover what was wrong.

“ She has beaten me black and blue for nothing ! ”

cried the girl hysterically. "Mr. Wesley, she is a devil incarnate—I can't stand my life with her any more! Don't try to stop me—I am bent on drowning myself in the river! I'd rather any day be dead than live in such slavery!"

It took Charles some time to soothe the frenzied girl out of her desire for death by drowning, and persuade her to return to Mrs. Hawkins. She would consent to go back only if he went with her.

"Get away from here!" Mrs. Hawkins screeched, at sight of him. "Get away from here, you damned little meddling pest!" And she reviled him scurrilously.

He bore her abuse with a dignified sad patience that almost made her foam. Then he left her, promising to pray for her. He was painfully shocked.

He was troubled about Mrs. Welch, too. So troubled that he was afraid to leave her to her own devices. It came to him that if he could bring her to a better state of mind, of true penitence, she might influence Beata Hawkins, and the pair of them influence Oglethorpe for the better. But when he hinted this to Mrs. Welch, she turned vixen and quarrelled with him until he fled. It didn't help him any to stumble upon Mr. Oglethorpe, who was with the men under arms, expecting an enemy. As if in Charles Wesley he beheld that enemy, Oglethorpe's inexplicable anger flamed and blazed out upon him. The hurricane of his rage drove the clergyman away.

Charles took his head in his hands. Oglethorpe in a senseless rage. Mrs. Hawkins in a senseless rage. Mrs. Welch in a senseless rage; and all with him. He couldn't understand. The growing change in Mrs. Welch, her increasing coldness, her insensibility to spiritual appeal, affected him even more than her anger. But why should

any of them be rude to him? What had he done to offend? For some days he kept away from Mrs. Welch. But his conscience stung him—wasn't this avoiding his duty?

“The reason I haven't talked with you lately is that you are so changed for the worse I despaired of doing you any good,” he explained when he called on her.

“Yes, I know I am changed,” she admitted, casting down her eyes and sighing. To Charles she seemed sad and distressed.

“What has happened, to make you as it were another woman?” he asked.

“Oh, I can't tell you: please don't ask me to tell you, Mr. Wesley!” And she gave him a long, meaning look, in which he thought he read not only grief, but shame. For a horrid moment his heart stood still. His dark suspicions revived.

“Is it about—the great man?”

“Yes,” she breathed.

They regarded each other silently, her eyes full of dark meaning, his full of pain and pity.

“I pray God that the sins of others may not ruin you!” cried Charles, and hurried away, almost running in his eagerness to be gone. For the moment he could bear no more. But as Mrs. Welch stood looking after him, she laughed.

The next night Charles Wesley wrote in his diary:

“Thursday, March 18. To-day Mr. Oglethorpe set out with the Indians to hunt the buffalo upon the main, and to see the utmost limits of what they claimed. In the afternoon Mrs. Welch discovered to me the whole mystery of iniquity.”

Oglethorpe was guilty. He was an adulterer, a hypocrite. Beata Hawkins was his mistress. She had ad-

mitted it to Mrs. Welch, who now confessed the hideous truth to dear Mr. Wesley, for her own soul's sake. She and Mrs. Hawkins had quarrelled, because Mrs. Hawkins was jealous.

"Dear Mr. Wesley, pray for me! And promise me to keep this miserable matter locked tight in your own breast. Indeed I never meant to tell it to any living creature—but it has so tormented me, I had to ease my heart by sharing it with so good a man as you."

"You must seek satisfaction only in the means of grace." Charles tried to console her.

His thoughts were in a horrid ferment. The secret confided to him ate into his mind, so that he could no longer think clearly. He couldn't see the most commonplace events of life in the small pioneer community without a certain distortion. He consulted "the oracle of God" for guidance. When he opened his prayer book, the daily lesson seemed directed to him, for him. When he cast lots, his answers fitted in with his own preconceived notions. And while he was desperately trying not to sink into despair because of the iniquity he was forced to believe against his chief, Mrs. Welch and Mrs. Hawkins laid their heads together.

"Well, I've started him off," said Mrs. Welch.

"The parson?" Mrs. Hawkins' eyes began to glitter.

"Who else?" asked the other, laughing. "Lud, the man's a ninny. Tell him anything, and he'll believe you." She added, with too envious admiration, "How clever you are: 'Twould never occur to me to think of such a thing, till you made me see it."

"Something has to be done," said Mrs. Hawkins angrily. "We must rid ourselves of these parsons, before they run us clean mad. Pray, preach, howl

hymns ! Howl hymns, preach, pray ! And we young women ! ”

“ No amusements, no routs, no fashions, no plays, no novels, no dancing, no cards, no lovers ; nothing at all, but these everlasting plagues and their everlasting haranguing and reproving,” put in Mrs. Welch, like one reciting a litany.

“ Might as well be dead and damned at once ! ” cried the more passionate Beata. “ There’s at least good company among the damned ! And they’ll be at Mr. Oglethorpe like gadflies, and have him as mad as themselves. And that,” she clenched her hands, “ I won’t have ! Damned canting dogs-in-the-manger always sniffing around—and baying their betters away.”

“ That’s what makes me so out of patience. A plague on the lot of them ! They’re harder to bear than the sandflies.”

“ The parsons are easier got rid of than the sandflies, if you and I stick together,” said Mrs. Hawkins. “ You see how easy ’tis to make that little fool swallow all you tell him . . . and how soft the great man himself is . . . on his blind side.” She spread out her hands, as the cat its claws, and slitted her eyes.

“ Men are all alike, great and small,” said she, smiling cynically. “ I learned *that* when I was knee-high to a duck. They’ll boggle if you tell ’em something they don’t wish to believe about a woman they happen to like ; but you can tell any of ’em *anything* against any other man (I mean anything with a woman in it) and they’ll bolt it, horns and hoofs. Men can’t afford to trust each other where women are concerned, because they know in their hearts they can’t trust themselves.”

“ Well, my dear, I like the gentlemen very well, myself ; but if I was to trust any of ’em farther than I could

throw a bull by the tail, I'd have no one but me to blame for what might happen afterwards," laughed Mrs. Welch. " You're right in saying they're good believers, though : the parson took it like gospel against the Governor ; and the Governor gulped it down against the parson. When I told him Charles had been after me with a naughty mind since he first met me in the ship, and was worse here, and I was frightened for my virtue, and what was a poor beset woman to do, Governor bit his lip and said he'd noticed somewhat himself. La, he was furious ! Said 'twas but respect for religion kept him from laying parson by the heels now and unmasking his villainy. Patted my shoulders and promised me his protection."

" So far, so good," nodded Mrs. Hawkins. " Now go tell him the rest—that Charles fixes all the blame on *him* to fool the people and hide his own wickedness. He'll take it all in one mouthful, and 'twill give him a fine heart-burn. Then I'll come with my complaint of John always making love to me and frightening and troubling me with bad proposals. Lord, I hate that John ! Once we're free of that pair, there'll be some pleasure in life, even here."

" Your husband, ma'am—can you be sure of the doctor ? " Mrs. Welch showed a faint concern.

" Fix my John on a vane, and he'll turn whichever way I say the wind blows," said the surgeon's wife, contemptuously. " He's years older than me, anyhow. Why, once, I—" She elucidated, with ribald details.

" Well, now, mine—" Mrs. Welch added to the chronicle. The two trulls laughed. The details were really very funny.

" And his Excellency ? "

" The devil take the hindmost ! " cried Mrs. Hawkins. " The best woman wins ! "

They were not clever women—merely designing and conscienceless. But they were young, pretty, and plausible, they had flattering tongues and comehither eyes, and the intellectual men against whom they hatched their coarse and shallow plot believed every word the two bawds told them. Charles thought now that Oglethorpe was a lecherous villain no honourable man could respect ; Oglethorpe believed that Charles was a base hypocrite, a lewd fellow who sought to gratify his desires under cover of his sacred calling. The soldier was shocked and enraged. He had, at first, reflected that the young clergyman knew nothing about women, and that close contact with the deluding creatures had turned his head. Oglethorpe, himself so adored of so many women, could smile at such a situation, tolerantly. He would get his secretary married off to some girl in Savannah, he had told himself. Marriage is an excellent tamer of skittish young clerics.

But when he had to review Charles' conduct in the light of Mrs. Welch's disclosures, Oglethorpe came to the conclusion that his secretary was a rascal, who was pursuing a married woman upon whom he wished to force himself as a lover ; worse yet, he sought to cast the mantle of his turpitude upon his chief's shoulders. His pursuit of Mrs. Welch, like John's pursuit of Mrs. Hawkins, hadn't passed unnoticed. Oglethorpe had heard the gossip but had hitherto ignored it. But here at Frederica his attention was always being called to Parson Wesley's shortcomings. Endless complaints, occasioned by Charles' tactless zeal and unwise meddling, annoyed the hard-worked soldier ; and these in connection with this last charge so angered Oglethorpe that he would have been more than human if he hadn't completely lost patience with his secretary.

If Charles had merely accused the handsome, rather

vain soldier of being the avowed lover of ladies who openly languished and spread their wares for him, Oglethorpe would have inhaled a pinch of snuff and delicately sniffed the matter from his mind. But to be made the cloak for a sacerdotal little scamp's sneaking intrigue was too much for the choleric colonel. He wondered if, perhaps, the apparently frigid John's designs upon Mrs. Hawkins were on a par with his brother's upon Mrs. Welch ? People had said so. But John was a very valuable man. Charles wasn't. Oglethorpe rather wished he had never laid eyes on either of the Wesleys. An impatient man, he couldn't look at Charles without discovering his feelings.

And Charles couldn't understand. It seemed to him that he was as one given over to be the sport of some malicious power. Everything conspired against him. He told the truth, and was accounted a hypocrite. Things right in themselves went wrong when he did them. All he could do was to pray for guidance.

One Sunday morning, while he was in the midst of his sermon, a gun was fired nearby, startling the whole congregation. One of the constables ran out and discovered that the offender was Dr. Hawkins. As Oglethorpe, instigated and persuaded by Wesley and Ingham, had given strict orders that there was to be no hunting or shooting on the Sabbath, Dr. Hawkins, over his protest, was arrested and locked up. When Mrs. Hawkins saw her husband being marched off to the guardhouse between two soldiers, she rushed to her own house, charged and fired a gun, then ran to the guardhouse, shrieking :

“ I have fired a gun on Sunday, too ! Now lock me up ! ” And she added : “ I'll kill the first man that dares lay a hand on me ! ”

Nobody taking up the challenge, she went home, swearing like a trooper. That afternoon, spying the parson

talking to her maid Catherine whom he had happened to meet, she rushed up and poured out such a torrent of abuse that the affrighted servant took to her heels, leaving Charles to bear the brunt of the battle.

“ You dirty little busybody ! ” she yelled at the top of her lungs. “ You’re at the bottom of all the trouble ! I’ll blow you up, and that fine brother John of yours, too ! I used to think he was an honest man, but I know better now—he’s as big a liar and hypocrite as you are. You got my husband arrested and locked up, when his patients need him. But I’ll fix you ! I know your sort, and so shall everybody else in this colony, before I get through with you ! ”

She stunned him with comments on his conduct, his morals, his intentions. And this was John’s fine convert ! She seemed to Charles completely possessed of the devil.

“ I pity you,” said he, crushingly. “ From my heart, ma’am, I pity you. And I defy all you and the devil can do—say what you will, you cannot hurt me ! ”

He felt very exalted as he stood there defying the devil and James Oglethorpe’s pet hussy.

“ Keep your pity for yourself and your brother John—you’ll need it ! ” she screamed.

“ I hope, ma’am, that you will come to a better mind. You need it,” he replied, with so much sincerity that she fairly ran away, to keep from attacking him with fists and feet.

That night, with diabolic ingenuity, the surgeon sent his pastor a note :

MR. WESLEY,

Being by your priestly order confined, the care of the sick is no longer incumbent upon me. As you have been busy intermeddling with my affairs, I request, sir, the

following patients may have proper assistance which hitherto has been before this time, and no neglect laid to your injured friend,

JOHN HAWKINS.

I dispute they have a right of confining a surgeon and especially for a day in confinement.

Instead of refusing to assume any responsibility, since he had had nothing to do with the matter, Charles fell into the trap. He visited the patients named, explaining that it wasn't his fault their doctor was locked up. The fact remained that the surgeon was in the guardhouse in consequence of an ordinance enacted at the instigation of the clergymen, and the town rather sympathized with Doctor Hawkins and his wife.

"My husband can't shoot a gun on Sunday without being thrust into jail," Mrs. Hawkins told the world. "But the damned parson can run after other men's wives all week . . . and nothing done about it!"

"When the husband's away the parson can play," put in Mrs. Welch sweetly. "Lord knows *I* ought to know what I'm talking about. If I was to tell you all I know about that man— The things he's always trying to whisper in my ears— He's terrible!"

"His brother John is even worse than he is," Mrs. Hawkins took up the tale. "A wolf in sheep's clothing, that's what I call him! The way Mr. John Wesley ran after me on the ship—and every time he had a chance since—made my life a torment. Always asking me for interviews, and writing me endless letters, and pestering me with bad proposals— If people only knew what sort of man he is he'd be run out of this colony!"

The little settlement was in an uproar. It was said that Mrs. Hawkins had boasted :

“ Mr. Oglethorpe dares not punish me ! ”

All the trouble was ascribed to Charles. Nevertheless, he felt enabled to pray for his enemies, “ particularly Mr. Oglethorpe, whom I now looked upon as the chief of them.” There is something peculiarly Christian and unanswerable in the spectacle of Charles Wesley on his knees praying fervently for his enemies, particularly Mr. Oglethorpe, whom he now looked on as the chief of them. Charles was guiltless. There was no blame—if one excepts his horrible stupidity—in his behaviour. Oglethorpe was guilty. Yet it was Charles who was being troubled, blamed, ill-treated.

A little later, doing his duty, he called upon Mrs. Welch, and with the last degree of astonishment, of stupefaction, heard her now accuse—herself. She, too, she confessed, had been seduced by Oglethorpe, who still wished to remain her lover—

“ Horror of horrors ! Never did I feel such excess of pity ! I gave myself up to prayer for her. Mr. Ingham soon joined me.”

The two crazy angels were still praying that Satan wouldn’t stand at Mrs. Welch’s right hand, when notice was given of Oglethorpe’s return. Shortly after, word was brought that he desired to see Mr. Ingham and Mr. Wesley.

They found the Governor in his large tent, around which the town had gathered, listening to Doctor and Mrs. Hawkins give their version of the gun affair. After a short hearing, Oglethorpe, reprimanded the officers who had carried out their orders and arrested the doctor, and the prisoners were dismissed. When they had gone, Oglethorpe turned to Charles and said sternly :

“ I am glad, sir, that you had no hand in this.”

Charles bowed, and said gravely : “ Mr. Oglethorpe,

I have something of the last importance to impart to you, when you have leisure to hear me."

But the Governor, picking up a batch of letters, paid no attention to him. He went on reading, without a further word or look. Seeing himself ignored, Charles beckoned Ingham, and the two left the tent, Ingham astonished, Charles with a sort of sick consternation. The woman dismissed, her husband all but apologized to, as if they had been injured! The officers reprimanded—even Hermsdorf, that faithful friend and soldier—for having done their duty! No wonder Mrs. Hawkins could boast that Oglethorpe dared not punish her! And when Charles thought why, he blushed for the guilty pair.

Charles was physically ill. His cold had brought on a fever, which his troubled and excited mind aggravated. The fact that he slept on the ground didn't help it any. A little after daylight the next morning, when Oglethorpe came to his hut and called him, Charles was staggering on his feet when he answered the summons.

In a raging temper, Oglethorpe accused him of mutiny and sedition, and of stirring up the people to leave the colony. They had held a meeting last night, and that morning had sent a message to the Governor asking leave to go.

"I'd have no scruples about hanging the lot of them out of hand," said Oglethorpe, grinding his teeth and stamping his feet, "but out of pure kindness I speak first to you, before taking action against your dupes. What have you got to say for yourself, sirrah?"

"I have this to say for myself: that I demand to be set face to face with the person who has accused me to you," said Charles.

"Wait here, and I'll fetch him hither. 'Tis Mr. Lawley!" said Oglethorpe, and hurried off on the errand.

But when Lawley confronted the clergyman, the charges of mutiny and sedition, of instigating revolt, fell through. The Governor dismissed him with a mild reproof, and with no apologies to Charles Wesley.

"I thank you for first speaking of me to what I was accused," said Charles gratefully. "I beg you will always do me this favour."

"Be assured, Mr. Wesley, that I shall," said Oglethorpe, grandly. The two walked together until they reached the Hawkins' hut. That virtuous lady came out aghast to see them together, but neither she nor the Governor asked him to enter. Charles left them, convinced more than ever that Oglethorpe was his mortal enemy.

Once more, in a towering rage, Oglethorpe called the sick man out of his hut in the morning.

"Mrs. Lawley has miscarried," he said abruptly. "Her husband claims it is because she was denied access to the doctor for bleeding her, you having had him locked up for shooting his gun on a Sunday. This evil is to be imputed to you, Mr. Wesley ! I should be a tyrant if I passed over such intolerable injuries !" And he turned upon Charles with a hostile and threatening look.

"But I knew nothing whatever of the matter !" cried Charles desperately. "It is intolerable that it should be imputed to me. You know very well that Hermsdorf told Dr. Hawkins he might visit any of his patients that wanted or needed him, and the doctor refused. I had no hand in the whole business—Hermsdorf himself has borne witness to that."

"Hermsdorf assures me that what he did was by your orders," said Oglethorpe, who had given those general orders himself.

"You mistake his imperfect English. Many have heard him declare to the contrary," said Charles.

"I know this much—that the people are in dread and confusion," said Oglethorpe. "They are all at sea, and I dare not leave them until I see them settled."

He was trembling with rage, for, touched at a point which threatened all his plans and ambitions, he was provoked beyond bearing. So alarmed was he, that for once in his life he was unjust, unkind, ungenerous to the point of actual baseness.

Oglethorpe's blind spot was his hatred of Spain. He hated Spain with a sort of left-over Elizabethan fury, a hang-over in the English blood, come down from earlier and more fiery days. He made a virtue of his bigotry, as the British do. He knew that Spain had the prior title to all Guale, as the province of Georgia was then called, all the sea islands from St. Helena southward, and the peninsula of Florida, which they had held for some two centuries.

To protect slave-holding Carolina and give England a safe frontier, Oglethorpe had set out to snatch from Spain all that she possessed in the south. It was a great game, and he played it practically alone, giving to it his fortune and almost his life. It satisfied at once his thirst for fame, his spirit of adventure, his love for England and his hate for Spain.

From his first coming to Georgia, all his mind was set upon pushing the southern frontier ever farther south. For this were the Scots at Darien, to this end he built Frederica on St. Simon's, fronting the tidewater and the marsh. As he had seized the Savannah to protect Carolina, he seized the Altamaha to protect Savannah. Had it been possible he would have seized the St. John's to protect the Altamaha. As it was, the great best James

Oglethorpe could do was to hold the Altamaha and keep Spain from encroaching upon his encroachments.

And now he felt himself threatened, for if Frederica failed, if his rope of sand went upon the wind, his darling project must be a confessed defeat which would spell ruin. With what tireless toil, trial, danger, money, he had got his little settlement here on St. Simon's, built his fort on the river bank, set his people to work, kept them busy, held them in check ! And just when he saw his hopes begin to shape toward realization, his colonists were ready to stampede like a herd of wild asses, because his sacred donkey of a secretary had brayed mischief into their silly ears !

That Charles had slandered him grievously was bad, but could be mended. But that he should endanger the very existence of Frederica, upon which all Oglethorpe's plans depended, was so heinous a crime in the soldier's eyes that it wasn't to be borne. He could have shot his secretary at sight for that ! His bitterness was not lessened in that he knew that England wouldn't countenance him unless he won. If he failed, he would have to bear the penalty : James Oglethorpe, so lauded, so behymned and bepraised and begarlanded, would go down in darkness and disgrace. Here lay Charles Wesley's real danger, though neither he, nor the other clergymen, nor the women who had fomented the mischief, understood it. They knew nothing of Oglethorpe's true plans.

Charles was in the meantime more and more troubled about Mrs. Welch, who was growing more and more like her friend. She said she wasn't going to be priest-ridden any longer, jested about his prayers, mimicked him to make people laugh at him, and talked in the loose, scandalous way of Mrs. Hawkins.

His illness not decreasing, and things growing daily

worse, it came into his mind to send for John. Ingham didn't want to leave him in the midst of such trials ; but finally he, too, saw the wisdom of sending for John, and agreed to go to Savannah for him.

Knowing that he was going to live with Oglethorpe, Charles had brought nothing with him but his clothes and books. The morning after Ingham's departure, he asked Oglethorpe's servant for a tea-kettle he needed, and was told that Mr. Oglethorpe had given strict orders nobody was to use any of his things.

"I don't think the order applies to me," said Charles.

"Oh, yes, sir, it does," said the servant pertly. "You was excepted by name."

"Thanks be to God," said Charles, "that it isn't yet made a capital offence to give me a morsel of bread !"

He had heretofore slept on the ground in a corner of Mr. Reed's hut. But as his cold continued, he tried to secure some boards which were being given away, to make a rude bed. He was roughly refused. They were given to any one else that asked. His few wellwishers were almost afraid to speak to him—the more timid turned aside to avoid him, or asked that he wouldn't take it ill if they seemed not to know him when they met. The servant that used to wash his linen sent it back unwashed. The clean, neat little man was forced to go in soiled garments, greatly to his distress.

Life was very bitter to Charles Wesley. He had been borne up by a spirit not his own, though, meek as he was, he was of a mettle as hardy as Oglethorpe's. Now mental torture and physical illness, starvation fare, bad quarters, exposure, and the grief of Oglethorpe's defection, were too much for him. The fever increasing, he was forced to take to his bed, or rather, to lie on the bare ground, sometimes wet through with rain. If old Samuel Wesley,

who had written poems in praise of Oglethorpe, if Susan-nah who had given her sons to the service, could have seen Charles then !

Mrs. Hird came to the rescue, bringing Mrs. Robinson with her, and offered what help lay in her power. She brought him some gruel, which threw him into a heavy sweat ; and the next morning the two gallant women came again openly to his aid.

“ Don’t, I pray you, bring trouble upon yourselves by taking this notice of me,” he begged them, feebly. But the two women merely smiled.

At night, his fever being abated, he was led out, staggering, to bury a poor scoutboat man who had been killed by the bursting of a cannon. By the dim light of a lantern, in the shadow of immense trees soughing in the night wind, and with the tidewater whispering an accompaniment to the solemn words, Charles Wesley read the Burial Service, and envied the dead man his quiet grave.

His extreme weakness now brought on the bloody flux from which most of the settlers had suffered, and from which his frugal vegetarian diet had hitherto saved him. Notwithstanding this, he was obliged to go abroad, and preach, and administer the sacrament. His sermon, “ Keep innocence, and take heed to the thing that is right, for this shall bring a man peace at the last,” was deciphered into a satire against Mrs. Hawkins. That night he got an old bedstead, the one on which the scoutboat man had died, and so did not have to lie on the ground.

Not the least of his torments were the sandflies ; all the plagues of Egypt multiplied by ten could not equal that one torment. They crawl under the eyelids and bite, they crawl into the ears and nose and sting, they build tiny fires upon every exposed portion of the body. Their name, like the worst of demons, is Legion. Had

sandflies been added to Job's afflictions, Satan would have very quickly found the way to triumph over the patriarch's patience. Charles had to rise from his sickbed and fight the sandflies with a heavy smudge of smoke, which choked his throat, stung his nose, and blinded his eyes. All Frederica was similarly engaged, so that the smoke of their torment rose to heaven.

When he arose in the morning he was so weak that he could barely stand while he said the prayers which "only two Presbyterians and a Papist" attended. Davidson the constable came to his aid as often as he could and sent his wife to minister to him. To these and the Hirds he owed his life.

"Thursday, April 6—To-day Mr. Oglethorpe gave away my bedstead from under me, and refused to spare one of the carpenters to mend me up another."

He crawled back into the hut and was lying on the ground, when John and Delamotte arrived and relieved the almost dying man. Rather than ask his enemy for aid, Charles Wesley had been on what was probably the first hunger-strike in American history; and his strength was so exhausted that he could hardly have held out another day. Had John delayed his coming he must have found Charles dead.

The two brothers went together to Charles' myrtle walk, Charles leaning on John's arm; for there was no talking, Charles said, "among a people of spies and ruffians," nor even safe to talk in the woods unless in an unknown tongue. They conversed in Latin, Charles telling John all that had befallen him. Both the Wesleys were absolutely convinced of the truth of Mrs. Welch's charges against Oglethorpe and herself. Despite which, Oglethorpe, who had received John with affable kindness, now came and carried him and Charles to breakfast—at Mrs. Hawkins'. And none of them choked.

CHAPTER VI

SAINTS AND SINNERS

ALTHOUGH John Wesley could accept anything Mrs. Welch said against herself and Oglethorpe, he could not bring himself to admit Beata Hawkins' guilt. His heart recoiled against it. To condemn her would be to admit that she had made a fool of him, and that the other members of the Holy Club had been quite right in their estimate of her, and he himself had been woefully wrong. So he brought all his powers of casuistry into play, to convince Charles—and himself—that the truth was untrue, that black was white. He gave his brother an account of a late conference he had had with her, with such effect in her favour that in the teeth of all he had seen, heard, and suffered, Charles was half-persuaded into a good opinion of Mrs. Hawkins.

John gave the benefit of no doubt whatever to Oglethorpe, though the Governor—a lady's reputation being at stake—laboured to bring him to a better mind. Oglethorpe's full-blooded, arrogant virility, his easy attitude toward that terrible temptation, Woman, subconsciously irked and offended John Wesley, whose one fixed idea was to save his own soul.

He liked Oglethorpe, and served him well and faithfully, but the handsome, hasty soldier reacted too glaringly against the frigid perfection the cleric sought to attain. Oglethorpe made life a pageantry, instead of a preparation. He was laughter-loving, and Wesley, altogether devoid of

humour, never felt the need of laughter. The clergyman knew only too well how hard was his own daily struggle to subdue the natural old Adam. How, then, could Oglethorpe, with only a nominal sense of religion, avoid the vices common to the natural man, and which were treated so lightly in the circles in which the soldier shone resplendently ? *It couldn't be done.*

That night Mrs. Welch sent for Mr. John Wesley, but he being closeted with Oglethorpe, Charles went instead. He found the woman almost distraught with fear.

“ You have betrayed my confidence ! You have told on me ! ” she accused him.

“ Pray quiet yourself, ma'am,” said Charles kindly. “ The fact that you betrayed me won't make me betray you in turn.”

“ But Mr. Oglethorpe will get it out of your brother ! ” she cried, wringing her hands.

“ My brother is a Christian. And I am so much of one as to prefer my own suffering to breaking my promise,” said Charles.

She breathed easier at that ; but if anything, she hated him more. She said sullenly :

“ Mr. Oglethorpe charges me with having told you, and therefore your brother. He said I was in love with your brother. I admitted it, but not as he thought. I told him Mr. John Wesley was all made up of art. It made Mr. Oglethorpe very sad.”

“ Mrs. Welch,” exclaimed Charles, with much feeling, “ you have deeply injured me. I never built upon Mr. Oglethorpe's friendship, for I have no worldly expectations, but you have turned my best friend into my enemy for life. When in the openness of my heart I warned you against Mrs. Hawkins, why did you at once betray me ? Why did you invent falsehoods against me, and

tell her—and Mr. Oglethorpe—that *I* raised those reports against them? Did I deserve this at your hands?"

"No," admitted the pretty young woman, hanging her head. "Very far from it."

"What did you mean, then, by saying 'twas I slandered them?" Charles' voice was almost stern.

"Oh, I don't know what I meant! I must have been mad! Oh, don't tell Mr. Oglethorpe! I beg you, I implore you, not to tell *him*!"

"No. You are safe. I cannot return evil for evil. But I must in common justice tell him 'twas not I told you, but you who told me, of these scandalous reports. What was your object in saying what you did about Mrs. Hawkins?"

"Don't ask me," she cried, turning red and white by turns. "I—I must have been quite mad, I must have been bewitched! I said I don't know what."

"And was that false, too, that you told my brother and me about yourself—that Mr. Oglethorpe was an old lover of yours and for that reason you were coming out in the same ship with him by his arrangements?"

"Yes, it was false," she said sullenly. "I never saw Mr. Oglethorpe until I came into the ship."

"Then why have you vilified yourself?" cried Charles.

"Don't ask me. I can't tell you."

"Then," said Charles, after a pause, "I think I can now answer for you, and do you answer sincerely: Are you not in love with Mr. Oglethorpe? And didn't you invent all these falsehoods to gain credit with my brother, and thereby employ him to overthrow Mrs. Hawkins and so make room for yourself?"

"If *she* could have him, I didn't see why *I* couldn't! I never could understand what he saw in her! She's had plenty others. She fills out her shape, she wears

false hair, her complexion comes out of a paintpot ! I am as nature made me. So I thought, if I wanted him, I saw no reason why I shouldn't have him. Now then, you have the truth."

For a while neither spoke. Charles felt his very ears blushing for her.

Then the young woman, looking up at him sidelong, said as if shyly and humbly :

" Dear Mr. Wesley, I deplore my bad behaviour to you, and my part in incensing Mr. Oglethorpe against you. Indeed, I think the devil must have been in me. I raised his suspicions against you, when I complained of your being . . . troublesome . . . to me. I told him you had bad designs upon me, and estranged him from you entirely."

" *I !* " shrieked Charles, bounding from his chair. " This from you ? What had I done to you ? Did you ever receive anything from my hands but kindness ? "

" I told him you . . . wanted to be too kind," she said. " Mrs. Hawkins was always egging me on. She kept saying we must get rid of these parsons and then we should have Mr. Oglethorpe to ourselves. She . . . she . . . was willing to . . . share. . . . She told me to accuse you to him, and she would then accuse your brother John. She said the same things of him I said of you. Now I find she has laid all on my shoulders and would have me ruin you that she might ruin me . . . and have *him* for herself."

" What you said of her history to my brother is true ? " he probed.

" Every word of it. She meant to draw your brother on, and then expose him."

Charles Wesley saw as it were the abyss opening before him, and perspiration started upon his forehead. After

a long pause in which he struggled with a natural anger, he said thickly :

“ God forgive you as freely as I do ! Madam, you owe me a public vindication for the cruel injury you have done my character. But my innocence shall surely meet the fullest vindication from God ! ”

And he staggered home and told John, who was as astounded as he, but who did not for that reason exculpate James Oglethorpe. In his conferences with the Governor, John had not minced his words. He had repeated exactly what Charles had told him, withholding only the name of his brother’s informant. He had read extracts of the remorseless journal he had kept. With appalling frankness he let the Governor understand that he, for one believed every word of the women’s charges against him ; and he had given the grounds for his belief. Having thus done his duty, John Wesley left his chief to digest what he had said, and returned to Charles.

He had one thing more to accomplish : he must at once bring Charles out of the mind to starve rather than ask for the necessities which had been so cruelly withheld ; he must persuade his brother to go to Oglethorpe and request what he needed, as was his right. Charles having reluctantly agreed to do this, John’s work in Frederica was finished for the time being, and as quickly as he could he hurried back to Savannah—and Sophy Hopkey.

It cost Charles Wesley a heavy pang to keep his promise. But when he finally forced himself to ask for certain necessities, Oglethorpe assented without comment or question, and as a matter of course. Grateful for this, Charles bowed his thanks, and was turning to leave the tent, when Oglethorpe called him back.

“ Pray, sir, sit down,” said the Governor, with cold

politeness. "I have something to say to you, Mr. Wesley. I hear you have spread several reports against me and Mrs. Hawkins."

The breath almost failed in Charles Wesley's breast, and his mouth opened and shut, but no words came to his tongue. Over his face, pale from suffering and sickness, rushed a burning tide of indignation.

Oglethorpe, observing that sudden flush, went on frigidly :

"There is a great difference in telling such things to another and to me. When you told it to your brother, 'twas scandal. When he repeated it to me, 'twas friendship. My religion, Mr. Wesley, does not—like the Pharisees'—consist of long prayers, but in forgiving injuries, as I do this of yours."

The two men looked at one another, eyes locked. Charles was still silent.

"Not," Oglethorpe's tones were tinged now with a sneer of contempt, "not but that the thing itself is a trifle, hardly deserving a serious answer. I only gave a serious answer to your brother because he believed your report true. Such things as these do not hurt a gentleman's character, Mr. Wesley. Why, they would but pass for idle gallantries, and rather recommend me to the world!"

For the first time a smile touched his mouth. The acknowledged handsomest man of his day, the gallant soldier, the great gentleman adored of fine ladies, looked with a sort of amused pity at the short, roundfaced little parson standing there before him with popping eyes and gaping mouth.

"Come, come, Mr. Wesley!" cried Oglethorpe, still smiling, still with scornful raillery. "You must see that such a complaint can't possibly hurt me, even if I were

guilty . . . which it happens, however, I'm not ! I'm afraid that disappoints you, Mr. Wesley ? ”

Charles turned red and white. He made fumbling motions with his hands, but still he could not speak.

“ Suppose I *had* selected any particular lady for my mistress, Mr. Wesley ? What difference could it possibly make to anybody but the lady and myself ? None. None at all ! ” He threw himself back in his seat, and looking with a sort of cruel curiosity at Charles, he wondered aloud : “ Unless perhaps you yourself would play the sorry part of ascribing to *me* what you would fain do and be yourself ? ”

Charles, stung to the soul, got back his speech.

“ You suppose me guilty ? ” said he, with unconscious sarcasm. “ Then, sir, 'tis indeed great kindness in you to forgive me ! I deny the whole charge. Some who spoke it in my hearing have fathered it on me. As for telling you, I would have done so if you had allowed me. When I did tell my brother, it was that he might tell you —you would listen to him, if not to me. And let me say this : Mrs. Hawkins' own assurance was the ground of people's suspicions. All they say of you and her, they say, too, of her and my brother ! She said so herself at first, but has since eaten her own words. My brother tells me you told him she intercepted and read a letter of mine, with somewhat in it she takes to be against herself and some of her friends ? Sir, that letter was writ before ever this report was heard of. For the rest, I admit that to suffer as an evil-doer at your hands is the severest trial I have ever known.”

Moved in spite of himself by the ring of sincerity in the clergyman's voice, Oglethorpe asked suddenly :

“ But why, man, didn't you come to me at once ? ”

“ My shyness was caused by yours,” said Charles

truthfully. “Sir, I shall always look upon it as my duty to please you to the utmost of my power, and I hope you will look upon me as you were used to. But I know your unforgiving temper, and that if you once entertain a dislike or a suspicion, 'tis next to impossible to remove it.”

“Mr. Wesley,” said Oglethorpe, rather sorrowfully, “you have been very quick to think evil of me. That I pardon. You don’t understand. You, I suppose, like many, think a thirst for fame the motive of all my actions? That is a mistake. I have had more than my share of it, and my fortune is now, I believe, on the turn.

“Before I talk more about that, however, let me tell you that I desired to convince your brother of the untruth of the reports against me, out of the esteem I have for him—for he is just so considerable to me as my esteem makes him. In vain. He here renews his suspicions of me in writing. I could clear up the affair— But pshaw! It doesn’t matter!”

“Mr. Oglethorpe!” cried Charles of a sudden, “I believe before God that he, and you, and I, have all been equally deceived! Under the circumstances, I take myself to be at liberty to tell you what I thought never to have told. Sir, Mrs. Welch excited in me the first suspicions of you after we came here. She afterwards told you her own words as though they were mine, did she not? For this she confessed both to my brother John and myself, as likewise that she had falsely accused me to you of making love to her. She was put up to it by Mrs. Hawkins, who was always saying to her, ‘Let’s get rid of these parsons, and then we can have Mr. Oglethorpe to ourselves.’”

“Well—if she could so blacken my face, she could yours,” said Oglethorpe, musingly, but without anger, or even surprise. “When I heard from your brother that

you had defamed me with Mrs. Hawkins, I thought you a very devil, thus to divert any inquiries into your own guilt by throwing the charge upon me.

“ Why, I had about made up my mind to make an example of you ! Everything concurred to make me believe in your guilt. Everything you said and did. Your shyness and silence. Your pretended tenderness for Mrs. Welch, in the ship, your seeing her since, running thither continually and staying with her till midnight—oh, yes, I had you dogged for several days !

“ Everybody would have condemned you upon trial, Mr. Wesley, the circumstances were so strong against you. And you would have been tried and sentenced, but that I considered the effect it would have had upon religion in the colony.”

“ But what could you have thought of my former life, what could you think was my end in coming here ? ” exclaimed the appalled Charles.

“ Oh, I thought you were sincere enough at first, but that never meeting with many women before, and being perhaps sometimes encouraged and sometimes checked by an artful woman now, you were drawn on unawares into the depths of wickedness, and were now wholly abandoned and given up to the power of the devil.”

“ I thought you as a very devil as you thought me ! ” moaned Charles. “ The character she gave me of you was if possible worse than mine to you. She knew three of your mistresses in England ! She was seduced by you, and so, too, was Mrs. Hawkins ! You believed no more of Christianity than Mahomet ! You were a truly wicked man, and meant to take away my life—because I had found out ! For many days I expected you to murder me in cold blood—I never looked to come alive out of Frederica.”

“ You must have believed me a most complete villain ! ” exclaimed Oglethorpe. “ Ha ! You little knew what cause I thought I had to believe you an even worse scoundrel ! ”

“ That you could be so deceived ! ” lamented Charles.

“ She seems to have had no trouble in convincing you and your brother of my guilt,” said Oglethorpe, drily.

“ Alas, no ! No more than she had convincing you of mine,” agreed Charles, sorrowfully.

“ Ah, well, 'tis past, and one must forgive and forget what is past—and profit by the experience,” said Oglethorpe, leniently. “ You, I am sure, will be as tender of the poor, unhappy woman as I have been, leaving her full of comfort. I am determined never to mention one word of all this to her, and desire that you won't do so either.”

The lady's bad behaviour having been occasioned by her passion for his own handsome self, Oglethorpe found no difficulty in forgiving her.

“ She is a very subtle woman,” warned Charles.

“ She is a woman, and that explains and excuses everything,” said Oglethorpe, lightly. “ You don't understand ! My dear fellow, a man never understands women. A gentleman never tries to understand them. He loves them. This enables him to forgive—and ignore.” He added, with a charming smile, which had in it a touch of irony : “ I have already forgiven Mrs. Welch, poor thing ! Now do you do likewise.”

It was exactly that charitable and unmoral attitude in Oglethorpe which had made John Wesley so suspicious and finally so condemnatory of him. Charles, staring at the handsome, smiling face, experienced a sense of being somehow baffled and bewildered. But being of a sweeter and softer nature than any of them, he said gently :

"I was ever sorry for her. I have told her I do pardon her, freely, as I hope for pardon myself."

Oglethorpe had nothing to say to that, but the irony vanished from his smile and he looked with growing kindness at the innocent fellow. His naturally kind heart made him wish to be friends with his secretary, though he was forced to admit that his secretary's tactless goodness had made his own hard task more difficult. Yet, seeing that Charles had been the heaviest sufferer, Oglethorpe's affection for him revived. He had the quick temperamental generosity of his Irish mother, and now, with a sudden gesture, he put his arm around Charles' shoulder, and bending down, kissed him on the cheek. And for a moment both were silent.

"I am going on an expedition against our foes the Spaniards almost immediately, Mr. Wesley," said the Governor, with all his old-time confidence. "And I have a sentiment that I shan't return."

Charles cried out at that.

"I am going to my death," said Oglethorpe, gravely. "You will see me no more. Take my ring, and carry it to Mr. Vernon, one of the Trustees. Whatever you ask, within his power, he will do for you, your brother, and your family. I have expected death for some days, Mr. Wesley—I have letters which prove that the Spaniards have been busy seducing our allies, and expect to cut us off at a blow! But death is to me nothing. Vernon will pursue my designs—he knows them—and to him I recommend them—and you." And he drew from his finger his diamond ring, and presented it to the deeply-touched Charles.

"Mr. Oglethorpe," cried Charles, weeping, "I shan't wait until you have entered the better world to let you know the truth: sir, I shall never make use of this ring

for myself. I have no worldly hopes—I have renounced them. Life is bitterness to me. I care not how soon I lay it down. You say you are going to your death. If that is so—and you are satisfied now with my complete innocence of the charges laid against me—I care not how soon I follow you !”

“ I have here given you some verses of mine, too,” said Oglethorpe, “ which will show you my feelings ! ”

And the two admired each other : Charles, because he thought he had regained his chief in spotless innocence ; Oglethorpe, because his secretary, so far from slandering him, didn’t even want to remain alive if the Spaniards killed his master.

The days of the Governor’s absence were days of terror for the people of Frederica. There were constant alarms—even the sight of a friendly Indian threw the town into an uproar, and the sound of a gun sent the frightened people flying pell mell for the shelter of the fort. Charles alone knew the real extent of their danger ; and every morning he woke with the sick fear of receiving word of Oglethorpe’s death.

He was so glad to think the man guiltless, that he strove to convert everybody else to that belief, Mr. Moore among others.

“ Wait a minute,” said Moore, laughing. “ Before you cram his innocence down my throat, listen to this, and tell me what you make of it ? ” With a cynical smile, he read aloud a list of officers to be appointed ; and who should be named for Head Bailiff but . . . Mrs. Hawkins’ husband.

“ Ha ? ” jeered Moore. “ Here’s innocence for you ! For Head Bailiff, mind you ! Well . . . everybody knows he’s a very accommodating, generous man, the doctor ! If you see a particularly fine pair of horns going

around the woods, Mr. Wesley, don't shoot . . . they might be carried on two feet, instead of four ! ” And he gave a shout of ribald laughter. Charles had no reply. Oglethorpe had told him he was not guilty, and it was his duty to believe his superior’s statement. But still—Mrs. Welch’s complaints—“ *If she can have him, I don’t see why I shouldn’t. . . .* ” Mrs. Hawkins’ husband named by Oglethorpe for Head Bailiff. . . .

He had been taken back into the Governor’s confidence and favour, and, everybody knowing it, he had no more trouble with the people. Rather, they showered him with civilities which saddened and shamed him. When Oglethorpe returned from his expedition, unharmed and victorious, and the colony was saved and safe, Charles rejoiced heartily. But still—

Everything was fair and bright on the surface, Wesley receiving every mark of affectionate favour, Oglethorpe as kind as of yore, the women subdued, the town busy. But Charles was profoundly unhappy. The iron had entered his soul when Moore read to him that list of appointments which made Dr. John Hawkins Head Bailiff. Oglethorpe, going out to what he thought his death, had thought to do a last favour to that woman, who stood to him in so sinister, so ambiguous a relation. Charles groaned in spirit.

His usefulness in Frederica was at an end. He could no longer abide the place, he could neither trust nor like the people, and he could not look at Mrs. Hawkins, going about ~~her~~ affairs so nonchalantly, without a feeling of disgust.

He was afraid of this wild place.

He hated his position as secretary, feeling his ineptitude for the work. It came to him with increasing urgency that he would better change places with John in Savannah,

in accordance with their early agreement. How John would relish this he didn't consider.

When he spoke to Oglethorpe about the matter, he found the Governor quietly sympathetic. Oglethorpe thought he knew what was really the matter with his secretary—loneliness. He was convinced that the young man's usefulness would be very greatly increased by his taking a wife.

"I beg you to believe I speak for your best interest, when I urge you to marriage," said the Governor. "Celibacy isn't good for you. You have a social temper, and in the married state you'll find the difficulties of working out your salvation very much lessened, and your helps very much increased."

Charles listened respectfully. He was unmoved, and determined to remain unwed. From his recent experience with the ladies, he didn't want a wife—his, or anybody else's. Instead of taking a helpmeet he took a boat and one morning put in his unexpected appearance in Savannah.

CHAPTER VII

FOR THE GOOD OF THE STATE

THE more Oglethorpe pondered the case of Charles and John Wesley, the more convinced he grew that what each of these young gentlemen most needed was a wife. If John were married, he would settle down in Georgia. Had Charles been married, there wouldn't have been so much trouble at Frederica.

It didn't worry him that Charles should leave Frederica; in his heart, it was a relief to him to have that blundering saint out of the way of making more trouble there. He liked Charles, but he couldn't count upon him for such help as he most needed. As a secretary, Charles was a dismal disappointment; as a minister of the Gospel, he could be depended upon to blunder into trouble and to muddle things almost beyond repair.

But John now! John was a helper such as one seldom found, so intelligent that one relied on his cool judgment, could tell him anything and be sure he would understand. Oglethorpe leaned more and more upon John Wesley's willing shoulder. The more he saw of him, the more he respected him.

There was but one thing the Governor feared: the man's excessive zeal, the rigidity of his views. Oglethorpe thought him unnecessarily severe in his attitude toward things that others—quite decent others—found harmless enough. He knew, too, that he himself came under Mr. Wesley's disapproval on quite a few counts,

and it made him smile rather wryly. But how good John Wesley was! Savannah was still buzzing about the minister's behaviour in the school.

Wesley and Delamotte had gathered the children of the town together in a free school, with themselves as teachers. The better class children who wore shoes and stockings sniffed scornfully at the poorer ones who went barefoot. Delamotte complained to Wesley about this, some of his pupils having stopped school because of the ridicule to which they were subjected.

"I don't know exactly what to do about it," said Delamotte worriedly. "I'm afraid if I say anything to them in class, it will only make matters worse."

"We will change classes," said John Wesley, after a moment's thought.

The next morning the minister of Christ Church Parish walked into the schoolroom barefooted. He said nothing. Tranquilly he knelt and prayed, and rising, began at once to teach. Mr. John Wesley was not one to be giggled at, and a hush of awe and astonishment fell upon the classroom. Two or three mornings he came thus. The timid poorer children, taking heart, returned. And they met no more ridicule from the little snobs of Savannah.

When he thought of that barefooted march through the streets, before the gaping eyes and open mouths of all Savannah, Oglethorpe could not repress a smile. But it showed him the mettle of the man—exactly the sort of man the colony needed.

If John Wesley had a wife, now, the colony's stake would be his, its progress would affect him personally. He would be a married man, a husband, the father of children born on Georgia soil. Undoubtedly he would be much more valuable to Georgia as a married man than as a celibate clergyman footloose among women.

Mr. Oglethorpe began to cast up in his mind's eye the young women of the colony, seeking among them a possible helpmeet for Mr. Wesley. Miss Fossett? Excellent: but promised to Mr. Weston. The Bovey sisters? Fine. But the beautiful younger girl was betrothed to the young Dutchman, Appee; the elder sister was too pious—she'd increase Wesley's zeal, instead of taming it. Phœbe Hird, Betty Hazle? N-no, he rather thought not. He considered others, but couldn't find one exactly to his mind. Stay—hadn't somebody said something about that young niece of Causton's?

He paused, as there rose before him that young face of hers, pure and pale, with veiled hazel eyes, and softly curving lips. Sophy. A tall and very slender girl, little more than a child, but so self-possessed, with so much personal dignity, as to seem older. It was being whispered that Mr. Wesley was attracted. Oglethorpe hoped so with all his heart.

Mr. Oglethorpe's meditations upon the perfect fitness of Miss Sophy Hopkey as a possible wife for Mr. John Wesley were interrupted by Mr. Thomas Causton, Chief Magistrate, and also keeper of the stores, calling to see his Excellency. Mr. Causton discussed the affairs of the town, naming many names, and frequently mentioning Mr. John Wesley, a regular visitor at the Causton home. Mr. Wesley was teaching Mr. Causton's niece the French language, and directing her studies. He had made her and Miss Fossett devotees. Egad, he kept their noses to their books—and had them out o' bed betimes and at morning services—

Oglethorpe's straight glance caught Mr. Causton's eyes.

“ Which of them attracts him most? ” he asked bluntly. Mr. Causton appeared to consider.

"It is publicly known that Miss Fossett is shortly to marry Mr. Weston," he said cautiously.

"So I have been informed. I have also been informed that young Tom Mellichamp has pretensions to your niece," said Oglethorpe.

Causton made a wry face. He liked the young man's mother; he did not dislike Tom himself; but as a family connection what possible good or aid could be looked for from so wild a blade? One could never know what next to expect from Tom Mellichamp—except further trouble. True enough, Mrs. Causton had never discouraged his pretensions to Sophy. She had some damned silly notions, her husband reflected sourly, and just at present Tom Mellichamp seemed to be one of them. He himself would have preferred to send the young man about his business, but he hated to incur his wife's tongue. He had really paid very little attention to the matter.

"Tom Mellichamp would not make Miss Sophy or any of our young women a good husband," said Oglethorpe.

"He'd make good gallows-meat," said Causton, tartly. "The fellow's rope-ripe!"

"Oh, there's good in the boy," said the soldier, tolerantly. "We won't hang him yet awhile, Mr. Causton. But neither will we marry him to your niece. Don't you think Miss Sophy would be better married to an older and steadier man? She seems to me, from what I've seen of her, a sensible and intelligent young lady. Now," Mr. Oglethorpe, taking one hand in the other, examined his fingernails very attentively, "it occurs to me that the welfare of the colony would be augmented if our young ladies select proper husbands."

"You have some one particular gentleman in mind? What gentleman?"

" Suppose I should suggest a clergyman, for instance ? "

Mr. Causton's heart leaped. This was more to his liking. But he did not betray his eagerness. He said, as if doubtfully :

" She is over young for him . . . if 'tis Mr. John Wesley you have in mind."

His Excellency laughed.

*Let still the woman take
An older than herself. So wears she to him,
So sways she level in her husband's heart,*

he quoted. " If I read Mr. Wesley aright, what he lacks of youth he will make up in ardour. I hardly think Miss Sophy will have to complain of the—ah—infirmitiess of age, if she weds Mr. John Wesley," he finished drily.

" I also am of the opinion that Mr. Wesley would make a very devoted husband," agreed Mr. Causton gravely. And he rubbed his mouth with his forefinger as though his lip itched somewhat.

" Miss Sophy seems to incline to him ? "

" Sir, she sits at his feet like an idolater. But whether she's fixed upon him, I don't know. Who can tell what any woman really wants when half the time she herself doesn't know what she wants ? But I can say she seems to like him much—she's either with him or he's with her," he explained lucidly. " I dare swear 'tisn't on my account nor yet Mrs. Causton's that Mr. Wesley is so frequent a visitor at my house."

" I take your meaning," said Oglethorpe, " and with all the respect in the world to you and your estimable lady, I agree with you."

The two men sat silent for a few moments.

" A wife," Oglethorpe mused aloud, " a young and pretty wife, with connections of consequence, would be

most likely to keep him here. She could cure him of—certain over-zealous notions. A godly, sober, intelligent clergyman, a man of excellent judgment, one to be relied upon in any emergency—that is what we need. For the good of the whole colony. Aye, I do most earnestly wish to see Mr. John Wesley marry a wife and settle down here in Savannah, Mr. Causton."

"Naturally," said Mr. Causton, "I should like to see our girl settled down here, near me, married to a good husband."

"And I to see your girl's husband and my man's wife man and wife."

"Sir," said Mr. Causton, "I must remind you again that she is very young. Why, 'tis but yesterday she doffed pinafores! Would he like one so young for a wife?"

"A young and handsome wife is not likely to be objected to by even so godly a gentleman as our Mr. Wesley," Oglethorpe returned.

"You would wish me to encourage this?"

"I should regard it as helping the welfare of the colony, Mr. Causton."

"But I must tell you that I have heard from others, and once from himself, that he has a notion to remain celibate," said Causton. And he added: "As an aid to holiness."

"We must trust Miss Sophy to wean him from so deluded a notion, then," said Oglethorpe, with what in a less superior person might have been called a grin. "She must make him see that he can better serve God and the King—and the colony—with a wife and children."

"But isn't he going to spend half his time in Frederica? Won't that interfere?"

"Nothing must interfere with the welfare of his

colony!" exclaimed Oglethorpe. "I want John Wesley here in Georgia, and I want him here a married man. Causton, you send that girl to Frederica, to be there when he arrives. Miss Fossett's there now with the Hirds. Wouldn't Miss Sophy like to visit her?"

"Why, the Hirds have been asking her to visit them, now I mind me of it!" exclaimed Causton. "I could trust her with Mark and Mistress Phœbe, and I know Sophy would grab at the change. The truth is, sir, that Mrs. Causton is—ah—somewhat short of temper at times . . . and she . . . is a bit severe with the girl. And there's Mellichamp. Sophy'd be glad to go, if only to put distance between her and Mellichamp. He frights her with his threats."

"I suggest a visit to her friends" the Hirds in Frederica, the sooner the better," said Oglethorpe promptly. "I will arrange a place for Miss Sophy in the scoutboat, whenever you advise me she is ready. Perhaps it can be arranged for her to go with me, on my next trip?"

"Your Excellency is very considerate of my nieces' welfare," said Mr. Causton, and the two gentlemen bowed.

"I think you said that Mr. Wesley is giving Miss Sophy lessons in the French language? This offers her the opportunity of continuing them without interruption. 'Twould be a pity to have her studies interrupted."

Mr. Causton bowed again. "Aye, 'twould," said he. "Sir, I'd like to see Sophy well married and looked after. 'Tis a good girl. There's none better."

"I am so much of your opinion of the young lady's many merits, that I am asking you to let her friends the Hirds have the pleasure and benefit of her company in Frederica, Mr. Causton." And again the two gentlemen bowed.

"I shall then promise your Excellency that Mrs. Causton will spare our niece from our home for awhile, to . . . visit her friends the Hirds in Frederica. I have the honour of bidding your Excellency good morning."

"Causton," said the Governor suddenly, "I—" he paused, in momentary embarrassment, "Causton, whatever happens . . . if you would retain my favour . . . don't allow yourself to quarrel with Mr. John Wesley."

Causton had turned, his hand on the doorlatch.

"Sir," said the magistrate, "'tis not my desire to quarrel with any, much less my pastor. Sir, what if the shoe be on t'other foot? May I ask if you have likewise so cautioned Mr. Wesley not to quarrel with *me*?"

"Tush, man!" cried Oglethorpe, impatiently. "It takes two to make a quarrel!"

"I see that your Excellency understands the case. I will bear the caution in mind," said Mr. Causton.

The magistrate was well satisfied with that interview. It would not be a bad thing for Sophy to marry the minister—and it would be a very good thing to have a man like Wesley allied with himself by such close ties. Wesley was a man of learning, a gentleman, in high favour with the Governor, and sure to become of great consequence with the colony. Such an alliance as Oglethorpe proposed would advance the Causton interests and Wesley's as well; the Caustons were childless, and Sophy would be their heiress. Aye. A desirable match, from every standpoint.

The Caustons were fond enough of the girl, in their way, but at times they found it rather a hardship to have an orphan on their hands, and both of them would be glad to see her safely settled. Now that the Governor himself pointed the way to this desirable end—which would at once get rid of Mellichamp, and silence his wife's

complaints—Causton was more than willing to aid the project. Sophy's possible feelings in the matter didn't greatly concern him. He thought it would be easy enough to make her see her duty, particularly since her inclinations seemed to point the same way. Even if they didn't, he had her best interests at heart, hadn't he? Naturally, then, she must do what she was told.

Some ten days later, Mr. Oglethorpe, sailing in the scoutboat, took in his charge Miss Sophy Hopkey, going to visit her dear friends the Hirds in Frederica.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SONG OF SONGS

ALL sorts of tragic things were happening in Savannah. For one, old Tomochichi was at last going to the Happy Hunting Grounds of his fathers. He had been Oglethorpe's firm friend, and the white chief was grieved to the heart that the Mico was leaving him. Among all his griefs and trials, this was one of the severest. And then there was the sudden and tragic death of young and beautiful Becky Bovey, which had cast a gloom over the whole community. She had been at tea with guests, when her sister Margaret, seeing her change colour, asked if she felt unwell. Becky made no answer, and somebody seeing Doctor Tailfer pass the house at that moment, called to him.

“ I’m afraid my sister isn’t well, Doctor,” cried Margaret, anxiously.

The surgeon looked at the young girl closely, felt her pulse, and said abruptly :

“ Well, madame, your sister is dying ! ”

“ Oh, do something, do something ! ” cried the others, frantically.

“ Bleeding might help,” said the surgeon, doubtfully. And he bled her about an ounce, when she sighed, leaned back, and was gone.

When John Wesley heard the tragic news, he ran to the house at once, full of grief, for the Bovey girls were his firmest friends, and it was at their house that his first little band of devotees gathered.

He implored them not to prepare the young girl for burial as yet, for it might be she was only in a deep swoon. The lovely body was warm, the cheeks were softly coloured, and when they bent the arm that had been bled, some drops of blood started out, but there was no breath and no pulse, and after some hours of anxious waiting, the young girl was pronounced dead and made ready for burial.

Wesley thought he had never seen so beautiful a corpse in all his life. He had that sense of outrage which one feels at sight of the young and beautiful seized upon by death. Her sister's gentle resignation in the face of so great a calamity startled him. Would *he* have been so meek?

That evening there was such a frightful thunder and lightning storm as terrified Wesley almost out of his wits. "This voice of God," he cried, "tells me I am not fit to die. I am afraid of it, rather than desirous of it. Oh, when shall I wish to be dissolved and with Christ?"

The whole town, shocked and saddened, attended the funeral the next evening; and after prayers and a sermon, John Wesley buried his lovely friend. Her death but drew him and her sister more closely together. They needed each other. Her house was more than ever his place of refuge, and in the days of storm that were to come, she was to remain firm and true to the last.

But, greatly as he liked and respected Miss Bovey, she could not fill Sophy's place, and he was restless and unsettled. Charles was leaving America. And now Sophy was not here!

He had established with Sophy the most endearing of all bonds, that of teacher and pupil, and so softly and insidiously had she stolen into his heart that the mischief was done before he was aware of it. He read her serious

religious books, and she listened, made oddly apt comments, and showed by the seriousness of her attitude that she understood and appreciated what she heard. She would sit quietly, her bright hair brushing her cheek like some sweet bird's wing, her hazel eyes glancing at him through their valance of dark lashes. All that was young and fair looked at him out of Sophy's eyes.

She dressed always in white. He had expressed a preference for white, and the Caustons humoured her whim to wear it, since it suited her and the climate. This classic simplicity, the white kerchief covering her breast that was whiter than the Cherokee rose, the spotless folds of her dress as she moved, her white hand with its pink fingertips, stirred his heart and appealed to his fastidious senses as no colour could have done.

When Sophy walked beside him in his garden he experienced the most exquisite happiness he had ever known. He felt in his heart a timid and gentle fluttering, as of small wings. Sometimes the intensity of his feelings frightened him, and he would grab Scougal's "Life of God in the Soul of Man" as one might a life preserver, and read it to Sophy. All in his clerical black, austere dandified, the little priest would lift his eyes of a holy lover from the heavy book he read, to make sure she understood. So might Paolo have met Francesca's eyes, in Rimini.

Sometimes he would read Milton, his grave clear voice rising and falling ; and while his lips spoke of forbidden trees and mortal taste and death and woe and loss, his eyes sang the passionate Song of Songs.

" . . . Behold, thou art fair, my love ; behold, thou art fair : thou hast doves' eyes within thy locks. . . .

Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech is

comely : thy temples are like a piece of a pomegranate within thy locks. . . .

Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins, which feed among the lilies. . . .”

And Sophy's eyes sang back to him :

“ . . . *My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand. . . . His mouth is most sweet : yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend.”*

When he had fallen ill, Sophy had come to the parsonage and nursed him. Always in white, her cool soft hands touching his fevered head. Always low-voiced and gentle. . . .

Once, waking from uneasy slumber, he looked up from his bed to see her standing near the window. She was very still. From where he lay he could see her face, her eyes raised to the outside light with a far-away and touching gaze. She was like, he thought of a sudden, a tall white candle burning quietly on the altar, shining all by itself in an empty church. She felt his gaze and turned her head to meet it. And he was conscious of warmth, as if he had spread his chilly fingers of an ascetic before a sacred fire hidden at the heart of life.

She glided across the room and laid her palm upon his forehead. He quivered, and closed his eyes, afraid to let her see the flame that leaped into them. Little prickling flames always ran through his veins when Sophy touched him. Strange, that hands pale and cool as lilies should have the touch of fire !

Delamotte had watched the progress of this friendship with sour dissatisfaction. It irked him horribly to see Sophy at Wesley's bedside. He could have done all that

was necessary for his friend, he thought, or else there should have been called in some friendly, older woman, her cap covering her graying hair: a much more fitting figure for a godly clergyman's sick-chamber than this disturbing creature in white.

When Delamotte saw her bending over his friend, he wished to push her aside and shut the door upon her. He wished Mellichamp would catch her and marry her. He wished the Caustons would send her back to England. Anything, to get her away from here! Already she was coming between John Wesley and those who knew and loved and understood him best. If she succeeded in what Delamotte believed was her design, what was going to happen to John Wesley? And he watched the girl with hostile eyes.

Sometimes when her presence, that seemed to soothe Wesley into a sort of trance, had worried and disturbed Delamotte beyond bearing, he would leave the house abruptly, plunge into work, or take long walks. But he couldn't escape his own jealous fears, and presently he sought the Moravians, into whose ears he poured his doubts.

"If the maiden is as pious as she seems, and loves our brother with a holy love, she might make him the godly and modest wife that he, and all men, need," said David Nitschman, mildly.

"Marry him? Ye would have her *marry* him?" croaked Delamotte, aghast.

"We believe in holy matrimony, my brother," said the Moravian. "It is a help to holiness. It trains and disciplines and restrains. If the maiden be what she seems, let us sing for joy!"

"And if she is what I think she is—?" asked Delamotte.

“ Then must ye fast and pray,” said the Moravian.

Delamotte fasted and prayed. When Wesley was better, and Sophy had gone home—where she belonged—Delamotte allowed himself an extra slice of nice stale bread as a mark of feasting. His friend was well again. But his rankling jealousy remained, for as soon as Wesley was able to resume his labours, his readings, his singings, those hours in the garden which he so loved—there was Sophy walking and talking and reading and praying and singing with him with a sort of deeper intimacy, the soft tones of her voice mingling flutelike with Wesley’s tenor.

Delamotte looked and lowered and lamented. He thought she boded no good to the adored friend of his soul. It was only when he heard one morning that Miss Sophy had gone on the scoutboat to visit the Hirds in Frederica, that his gloom lightened. Now he and Wesley could go about their proper business free, for a breathing spell, of this nuisance of a girl !

And then came Charles Wesley, unexpectedly, shattering his peace with the flat statement that he had had all he could stand of Frederica, and John must exchange places with him. John must go to Frederica . . . and Sophy ! Charles would remain in Savannah, and Delamotte must stay with him.

Events in the colony made it absolutely necessary that one of the Holy Club should now be sent back to England to report to the Trustees, and it was decided that Charles could be better spared than John. He had already handed in his resignation to Oglethorpe who read it carefully, took Charles aside, and asked him if all he had said wasn’t summed up in a couple of lines he showed him pencilled on the letter :

*Sir, to yourself your slighted gifts I leave,
Less fit for me to take than you to give.*

"Mr. Oglethorpe, I don't desire to lose your esteem," Charles answered respectfully enough, "but I could not preserve it with the loss of my soul."

"Oh, I'm satisfied of your regard for me, Mr. Wesley," said the Governor. "Now do me a favour: don't let the Trustees know you have resigned. There are too many hungry fellows ready to catch at the office, and in my absence I can't hope to put in a man of my own choosing. The best I can hope for is an honest Presbyterian, many of the Trustees being such. If they send me a bad man you can imagine what will happen should he deal corruptly with the Indian traders. I'll be in England before you leave it. Then you can put in a deputy, or resign."

"I will do exactly as you request," agreed Charles.

"I shall repeat a bit of advice to you, Mr. Wesley: I would recommend marriage to you rather than celibacy," said Oglethorpe, tapping him on the shoulder. "When you return to Georgia, bring a wife with you."

John waited only to bid Charles Godspeed, ere he himself was off for Frederica, leaving Delamotte and Ingham in charge of Savannah.

It was a three days' trip, and he reached his destination tired, and with a touch of malarial fever upon him. Oglethorpe, who was to set out for Fort George the next day, received him cordially and was "open and friendly." He mentioned Miss Sophy, casually; to whom Wesley hurried as soon as the Governor had left him.

She and Miss Fossett had each a small, palmetto-thatched hut next to the Hirds' which gave them greater privacy. In that simple and kindly atmosphere of pure family life, Sophy blossomed. She seemed to John Wesley "quite right" and he was delighted to resume with her the rule of hourly prayer. He told her how

happy it made him to see her here with the family so beloved and trusted by him. He found Oglethorpe there the next day at noon, very solicitous for Miss Sophy's comfort and happiness, expressing himself as greatly pleased that Mr. Wesley was in Frederica.

"Mr. Causton asked me to have a care of Miss Sophy," Oglethorpe explained as he was taking his departure. "I shall transfer that pleasant duty to you, Mr. Wesley."

Mr. Wesley said he would be delighted, and after the soldier's departure, he read his slowly growing "Collection of Hymns and Psalms" to Sophy. Later he read his Journal to her. Before the public prayers, he had private prayers with her. And then he went home and reproached himself for having been too long in her company.

His duty as a pastor was to visit Mrs. Hawkins, and he did so. But this grave clerical gentleman was not the little minister who had sought her so eagerly on the *Simmonds*. His conversation was altogether impersonal, and he took his leave shortly.

"I am not as I was before," he told himself, with something of wonder at his changed attitude toward the woman who had so wholly engrossed him such a little while before.

His fever returning, he called in Dr. Hawkins, to whom he told his symptoms—"a little hot, a little cold, sweat, headache, sweat." And while the surgeon sought to mend Mr. Wesley's body with medicine Mr. Wesley seized the chance to administer spiritual medicine to the surgeon's soul.

Mrs. Hird and Mrs. Robinson, Charles' Samaritans, concerned now for Mr. John's health, came presently and fed him with wholesome bread and butter. Mr. John at once got out of bed, prayed, preached, and held another society meeting!

Most of the people of Frederica looked upon his presence there sourly enough. What, had they got to stand for this parson, after all the trouble they'd had with his brother? And they began to manifest their displeasure so persistently that he wondered, with a troubled mind, whether he could do any good among such people? Frederica wanted neither of the Wesleys.

John Wesley began to hear and listen to the same old stories. Some correspondence between himself and Charles had been intercepted and read, and the ladies of Frederica were incensed because of two or three Greek words in the letter. Those Greek words had a sinister aspect. They looked *bad*. Think of writing something so wicked it couldn't be set down in plain English!

The malarial chills and fever still held Wesley in their grip, and Dr. Hawkins was now treating him with "a decoction of the bark." Going one morning for his supply, he found the surgeon out, but Mrs. Hawkins at home, who invited her pastor to come in and sit down, taking a seat beside him.

"Madam," said Mr. Wesley presently, "I am sorry to find that Dr. Hawkins, whom I ever thought my friend, is now among my enemies and detractors."

"What!" she cried, starting up. "What do you mean by saying such a thing? How has my husband treated you ill, sir?"

"He has wronged me by exposing a paper which was my brother's, and which as a friend he should have shown only to me."

"I want to tell you, Mr. Wesley, that all the women in this town are uneasy and affronted at the two Greek words they find in that same paper. Pray, sir, explain to me what those words mean?"

Wesley hesitated, and replied evasively:

“They were written by my brother . . . when . . . when things were not quite plain to either of us. My brother is now of quite another opinion. But I take him to mean by those words only two persons, yourself, and Mrs. Welch.”

Beata Hawkins leaped to her feet.

“Villain!” she exclaimed. “You pitiful scoundrel, you miserable rascal!” And she began to revile him, in the midst of which her husband walked in.

“John,” she screamed, “this nasty villain has just told me that that dog his brother meant *me* by those damned Greek words!”

Always under his shrew’s dominion, the surgeon now joined her in cursing and abusing the Wesleys. Shaken and sick, hot and cold from malarial fever, John Wesley sat there, unnerved, looking from one to the other. And of a sudden, he shed tears. The two took those tears of grief for fear, and their insults grew grosser.

“We’ll unfrock the pair o’ ye!” bellowed Hawkins.

“The sooner the better,” said Wesley, still shaking. “In the meantime I shall go to Mr. Oglethorpe.”

Just returned from a fatiguing and dangerous trip, once again Oglethorpe had to listen to Wesley-Hawkins quarrellings, which John now poured into his tired ears, and which the doctor and his wife repeated more warmly and violently.

“In my opinion,” said Oglethorpe presently, “Mr. Charles Wesley was very indiscreet in writing a letter which contained two Greek words. But I don’t see how Mr. John Wesley can be held accountable for it. And I think that Dr. Hawkins and Mrs. Hawkins have behaved very badly in abusing Mr. John Wesley in a manner no way justifiable or excusable.”

Having thus visited and been entertained by one of his

dear parishioners, Mr. Wesley went and spent an hour with another, his old friend Mr. Horton, labouring to make that sceptical person understand that he was not his enemy. But Horton had heard stories which he would not repeat, and was consequently immovable as a rock.

“ You are always,” said Mr. Horton, “ prying into other people’s affairs, to set them by the ears. You have betrayed every one that ever trusted you. Why, you would betray the confessions of dying men ! You have belied every one that ever talked with you, me in particular.”

“ Give me instances ! ” cried the astounded Wesley.

“ It isn’t necessary,” said Horton, shortly.

“ What motive can you think would induce me to behave thus ? ” asked Wesley.

“ I believe in my soul ’tis a pure delight in doing mischief,” said Horton. “ I believe when you say your prayers of a morning, you try to resolve against it. But by the time you’ve been abroad a couple of hours, all your resolutions are vanished, and you can’t be easy in your mind till you’re at it again. That’s my plain opinion of you, Mr. Wesley—and many other honest people’s as well.”

Mr. Wesley got up at that, bowed to Mr. Horton without a further word, and walked out of his house. But he only walked into further trouble ; Mrs. Welch came up at that moment.

“ Damn you ! ” she greeted him. “ What do you mean by saying that I’m an adulteress ? ” And she entertained him—and the audience that had quickly gathered at the sound of her voice raised in anger—with such an outpouring of gall and profanity as made him feel ill.

“ God deliver thee from the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity ! ” cried John Wesley to himself. And

he thought that there was nothing for him to do now but to look upon these former friends and acquaintances as dead. It seemed to him that he had borne from them all that mortal flesh and blood could bear.

The next afternoon, Mrs. Hawkins sent her maid to him with a note, begging him to come to her at once on a matter of importance.

CHAPTER IX

A PASTORAL CALL

HE had had a strenuous Sabbath. Very early in the morning he had had a talk with Mr. Reed, Charles' old friend, who was to take charge after Wesley's departure. Sophy and Miss Fossett came in, but seeing Mr. Reed, they left, promising to see their pastor later in the day.

To prepare himself for the sermon ahead of him, Wesley read for a while from "The Contrite Heart," and then gave himself up to the usual silent meditation, after which, opening the little leather-bound "Collection of Hymns," he sang "My Soul before Thee prostrate Lies," while he robed himself for services. After dinner he read Cave for a while, and, Sophy and Miss Fossett returning, he walked with them in the parsonage garden, talking with pleasant soberness. He was happy to have Sophy with him.

It was August in Georgia, and a day of hot bright sunshine tempered by a light breeze from the river, which stirred the garden trees gratefully. The whole beautiful wild island was a vast garden, in which the small inclosure of Wesley's was set like a small jewel within a larger. Peach and mulberry and young orange trees were flourishing. Charles had planted a parallel row of the myrtles he loved, to make a green lane. Between these myrtles John Wesley walked with his girl friends, as once Epicurus had walked the myrtle-bordered paths of a garden in Greece, talking philosophy with adoring girl-students. No one

of all those Greek girls ever turned to her teacher a fairer face nor clearer eyes than Sophy turned to John Wesley in that sea island garden in Georgia.

When the girls had left him he sang again, to quiet his heart. He was still singing when Mrs. Hawkins' maid appeared with the note requesting his presence. Should he refuse? Should he go? He didn't wish to see her again. He hated to have to see her again. But—his duty as her pastor—

“ Do you know what Mrs. Hawkins wants to see me about? ”

“ No, sir. She didn't say. She just gave me the note and said to give it to you.”

“ If a parishioner needs me, I must go,” he decided, with a sigh. And putting on his hat he accompanied the girl to the surgery, a one-story house of two rooms. In the front room Mrs. Hawkins, evidently expecting him, was waiting.

“ Pray, sir, sit down,” said she. Mr. Wesley seated himself upon the side of the bed, there being but one chair, beside which she stood. As he seated himself, she walked across the room and stood close beside him, her hands behind her.

“ You have sent for me, madam,” he reminded her.

Her face worked convulsively. Then :

“ You have wronged me! ” she exclaimed suddenly and violently. “ I am going to shoot you through the head this minute with a brace of balls! ” and bringing her hands from behind her with a jerk, she showed him in one a large pistol, in the other a pair of shears.

The startled man caught hold of the hand clutching the pistol, then of the other armed with the shears. With a piercing shriek, she hurled herself upon him, forcing him backward on the bed.

"Villain ! Let go my hands !" she roared at the top of a pair of lungs that carried half a mile. "You dirty dog, let me go !" And she began to swear like the mate of a troop-ship, pouring into his outraged ears a torrent of personal abuse, mingled with frightful imprecations. All the while she struggled to free herself.

"I'll have your hair, you lousy beast, or I'll have your heart's blood, damn you !" howled Mrs. Potiphar, straddling the meagre stomach of the unlucky Joseph and making furious thrusts of the shears at his head. Weakened by fever, almost swooning with horror, John Wesley used all his enfeebled strength to keep the shears at bay.

He feared to cry aloud, for very shame, unwilling to make public that which for her sake as well as his own, he wished to keep private. He dared not attempt to rise, since that would have made her ride him like a nag. Indeed, she rode him all too strenuously now, gripping his flanks with her knees, and using her heels to spur his shins black and blue. She was a strong and supple woman, he a small man. He might have upset her, pitched her, so to say, from the saddle, but that might have done her a lasting injury ; and there would have been a tussle on the floor, with danger of the pistol going off and killing one of them. A prudent as well as a Christian man, he lay still, lest a worst thing befall him ; and commanding himself to God, suffered this unheard of indignity for Christ's sake, contenting himself with holding the fury somewhat at bay.

Hearing her mistress' shriekings, the terrified maid ventured in.

"Fetch me a knife !" foamed Mrs. Hawkins. "I vow to God I'll be the death of you, you slut, if you don't get me a knife !"

But the girl, trembling in every limb, her eyes starting from her head, her jaws agape, was unable to move. All she could do was to stand there, rooted to the spot by the spectacle of her lady taking a hand-gallop on Mr. John Wesley's breastbone.

Her two men servants now rushing in : " Hold his hands ! " she yelled at them. " Come here and hold his hands for me ! "

" Take her off me ! " cried Wesley. " Take her off me, and hold her ! "

But they dared do neither. And in a burst of sudden, furious strength, the woman broke Wesley's hold upon her wrists, and seizing his hair, sheared one side of his head. Now indeed was he forced to lie quiet, dreading that if he struggled she might blind him with the sharp-pointed shears. Closing his eyes, he lay still, and prayed for deliverance. All the while the termagant, all but smothering him, uttered yells and imprecations, and hacked off his long hair, leaving one side of his head as bare as his palms.

Brought thither by the woman's shouts and oaths, Davidson the constable accompanied by Wesley's friend Reed, ran in, and stopped in their tracks, horrified by the spectacle that met their eyes.

" Mr. Welsey ! " croaked Reed.

" Take her by the arms," ordered Wesley, " and lift her."

But as they were preparing to do this, Dr. Hawkins himself appeared.

" At your peril ! " he shouted. " Touch my wife at your peril ! " And flourishing a surgeon's knife, he demanded furiously : " What is this infamous scoundrel doing in my house ? "

Reassured by this husbandly encouragement, Mrs.

Hawkins struggled violently to get her hands away from Wesley, who had again seized them ; but not being able to free herself, she turned like a tigress, seized on his cassock with her strong teeth, tore the sleeves to shreds, and then fixed upon his arm.

Two other men now ran in, making, with Hawkins and the two servants, seven standing by, gaping, none daring to touch the virago.

“ I think for your own sake you had better take a hand yourself,” said Wesley, fixing his eyes calmly enough upon Hawkins ; and the surgeon, seeing a crowd gathering, took his wife around the waist and dragged her bodily off her pastor, who, rising and shaking his torn and ruffled vestments, and tying a handkerchief round his wounded arm, betook himself to Oglethorpe, to whom he gave, briefly, a simple account of what had happened.

The unlucky Oglethorpe was forced to send for the pair. Mrs. Hawkins, not in the least abashed, defended herself valiantly. She had been, she said, vilely treated by Mr. Wesley and his brother, and he, Mr. Oglethorpe, had not done her justice for the wrong she had received ; wherefore she had done justice for herself. That was all. She wasn’t sorry. She’d do it again.

Oglethorpe, exasperated to the heart with the lot of them, yet heard them patiently, and presently, the Hawkins couple promising better behaviour, he dismissed them. Oh, these Wesleys !

John Wesley thought he had had an end of the matter, but Hawkins, embroidering the tale as he told it, told it to everybody he knew. And Mrs. Hawkins, not to be outdone by a mere man, made herself the heroine of a terrific adventure, which reflected sadly upon Mr. Wesley. The story grew and spread, running from house to house like the plague. The report passed from lip to lip that

the parson meant to steal away in the night ; so that many kindly folk came to advise him, seriously, to stand his ground like a man ; and some came to bid him good-bye, forestalling the farewell visits he wouldn't have time to make them. Finding himself embroiled afresh in the Hawkins stew, Wesley sat down at six o'clock in the morning and wrote to Oglethorpe :

SIR,

I choose to write rather than speak, that I might not say too much. I find it utterly impossible anything should be kept secret unless both parties are resolved upon it. What fell out yesterday is already known to every family in Frederica ; but to many it has been represented in such a light that 'tis easy to know whence the representation comes. Now, sir, what can I do more ? Though I have given my reputation to God, I must not absolutely neglect it. The treatment I have met with was not barely an assault ; you know one part of it was felony. I can't see what I can do but desire an open hearing in the face of all my countrymen of this place. If you (to whom I can gladly entrust my life and my all in this land) are excepted against as partial, let a jury be impanelled, and upon a full inquiry determine what such breaches of the law deserve.

He was profoundly upset. He had for some time known Beata Hawkins for a confirmed sinner ; he no longer cared for her—she shocked every gentlemanly instinct in him. His conscience had held fast to his duty as her pastor, in the face of danger, ridicule and misunderstanding, of antagonism from Oglethorpe, of angering his brother and his dearest friends.

Spangenberg had warned him to let her go her ways.

He loved and revered the saintly Moravian, yet in this he had withstood him, to follow what he had thought the right course. And now, at the end, this iniquitous humiliation had come upon him! Here was he, John Wesley, with his hair long on one side, and sheared barbarously on the other, like the victim of some absurd punishment, so that people looked at him with wonder or even with the pleased smiles of satisfied malice. Ah, he was indeed a fool for Christ's sake!

Oglethorpe sent Mr. Horton to him, who reminded him of the many divisions already in the town, and the fact that this would in all probability increase them a thousandfold.

"Of course, if you insist upon it, Mr. Oglethorpe will open a court. But we both think it would be better to settle things in a more friendly manner. There's trouble enough here as it is," Horton told him.

"I don't wish to harm either Dr. Hawkins or his wife," said Wesley. "But I simply have to insure myself against future insults, and put a stop to their misrepresentations."

"If you will let me talk with them, I think I can manage it to satisfy you," said Horton. And Wesley agreeing, Horton did so manage to impress the doctor and his wife, that he could return to Wesley with their sworn promise to trouble him no more.

That evening Oglethorpe sent for him, the surgeon and his wife, both very much subdued, being present. The Governor laboured for an hour with the three of them, endeavouring to reconcile their differences, which, he reminded them, threatened to bring further dissensions in the town. The Spaniards were threatening the settlement, the Indians were restless, and, now that Tomochichi was gone, could not be depended upon. If ever people

needed to be united, the people of Frederica did. And here were their doctor and their minister setting them the example of being at miserable outs !

Wesley, with his wounded arm tied up, forgave, as the injured are more apt to do. The aggressors were unrelenting. They said they simply couldn't forgive the wrongs he had done them. However, an agreement was patched up, part of which was that they needn't speak to each other any more. Wesley went home and wrote :

“ Blessed be God, who hath given me a full discharge in the sight of men and angels, from all intercourse with one whose heart is snares and knots, and her hands as bands.”

He was grateful. He was free. Oglethorpe, whose authority he could not question, his superior under God and the King, had given orders, and Wesley obeyed. He had done his duty, he had come out of the ordeal with clean hands. It was only when he thought of Oglethorpe, the man himself, and his relation to Beata Hawkins, that his soul sickened within him.

He did not cut the other side of his hair to match the shorn locks, but appeared tranquilly before a congregation, part of which saw him cropped like a Roundhead, part of which saw him with locks like a Cavalier's. But Sophy, knowing the truth from his own lips, marvelled at the spirit of the man.

The Spanish Don Antonio de Arredondo having come to St. Simon's to consult with Mr. Oglethorpe, there was bustle at Frederica, and a great Spanish vessel flying her flags within sight of the little town, which could see, too, the gleam of white tents pitched upon an island just opposite theirs. And Captain Gascoigne of the British sloop of war *Hawk* hovered nearby.

Oglethorpe needed John Wesley's swift pen and keen

brain then, and made good use of both. The clergyman was kept at the grindstone. In between times he set apart, out of the few he had in the one-room parsonage, books of general interest to be used towards a library for Frederica. He had instituted a public school and a Sunday school in Savannah; now he tried to institute the beginnings of a free library in Frederica.

When he got back to Savannah at last, Sophy remaining in Frederica, he was for a little while free from torment. After Frederica, Savannah seemed like heaven to him, and there were no women, for the time being, to disturb him. But all the time the island settlement, left shepherdless, stayed in his mind. Wild sheep! What should be done for them? When he submitted the matter to the judgment of his friends, it was agreed that he should return to Frederica, Ingham filling his place in Savannah. That settled, Wesley waited upon Mr. Causton, to ask what commands he had to Miss Sophy.

"Oh, let her stay there awhile with the Hirds," said Causton. "She's better there. That girl will never be easy till she's married."

"She is too afflicted to give it a thought," demurred Wesley.

"I'll trust a woman for that!" said Causton. "There's no other way to get her settled."

"But there are few here you would think fit for her."

"Let him be but an honest man—a good, honest man—and I don't care whether he has a groat!" cried Causton. "I can give them a maintenance."

"Sir," said Mr. Wesley, "what directions do you give me in regard to her?"

"I give her up to you. Do what you will with her, promise her what you will. I will make it good," said Causton, deliberately.

With these words ringing in his ears, John Wesley went back to Frederica after an absence of some two or three months.

Mark Hird met him with a sad account of affairs. Everything was wrong. The morning and evening prayers had been discontinued. Every form of godliness had been thrown off, all that ritual he had fostered had been chucked out overnight.

Even his adored Sophy was "scarce a shadow of what she was. Harmless company had stole away all her strength. Most of her good resolutions were vanished away, and, to complete her destruction, she was resolved to return to England." He reasoned with her much, but with no success. She could not see that she was at all changed, and continued fixed in her resolution of leaving America with the first ship that sailed.

Finding that the veil was still upon her heart, he besought her to pray to be directed. He read her the most affecting parts of Efrem Syrus, whom he thought the clearest of all ancient worthies. He read her "The Serious Call" but she appeared deaf to it, though she was "open and affected." He seemed for the moment to have lost his hold upon her, and this shocked him. She was firmly resolved to go to England. He was firmly resolved that she shouldn't.

Every day he went back to Sophy, and asked her :

"Are you still resolved to go back to England?"

"Yes," she answered, stubbornly.

And then he would "offer several arguments drawn from the topics of religion against it." When all these failed to make an impression, he began to press her upon the head of friendship. One day she suddenly began to cry.

"Now my resolution begins to stagger!" wept Sophy. As it did more and more every day.

Oglethorpe, who had been absent on another visit to the south, returned one afternoon while John Wesley happened to be in the Fort with Mr. Horton. The Governor strode up to Horton, kissed him, and expressed much kindness to him, but ignored John Wesley. He took no more notice of him, good or bad, than if he hadn't been there. The clergyman was not surprised. When he considered Beata Hawkins, he thought he ought rather to expect such behaviour from Mr. Oglethorpe, since he could surmise the insidious source of it. And he sighed, and said a silent prayer for the man. May God save James Oglethorpe, too, from that evil woman, whose heart was snares and knots, and her hands as bands !

When he related the incident to Sophy, he said, with a sad smile :

“ Now, Miss Sophy, you may go to England, for I can be of no further assistance to you. My interest here is gone.”

“ I won’t ! ” said Sophy, setting her soft lips. “ Now I shan’t stir a step ! ”

“ If it was Mr. Oglethorpe who advised you to go, he may be displeased,” insinuated Wesley.

“ Let him be pleased or displeased. I don’t care,” cried Sophy. Of a sudden she turned to him and said with deep feeling : “ Mr. Wesley, you encouraged me in my greatest trials. Don’t be discouraged in your own. Fear nothing. If Mr. Oglethorpe won’t help you, God will ! ”

“ And you won’t go to England . . . and leave me here . . . friendless ? ”

“ No,” said Sophy.

Oglethorpe sent for him presently, and the two talked long and earnestly. Wesley was returning to Savannah, without much good being accomplished, except the

restoration of Sophy to her former state of piety—and subjection to Wesley's will.

"As you are returning to Savannah, Mr. Wesley, I think it wise for Miss Sophy Hopkey to go thither at the same time," said Oglethorpe, as though casually.

When Wesley went to Sophy with that news, she fell into a great passion of tears.

"I can't bear the thought of it!" she wept. "They torment me so I shan't be able to think! You don't know my aunt! And Tommy's threatened to murder me!"

"Mr. Mellichamp is safe in jail for some of his frauds, Miss Sophy," soothed Wesley, longing with all his heart to gather her to his breast, to kiss away her tears. And then he told her of Mr. Causton's promise to him to make good whatever he should promise her. She could therefore make her own terms, and he would see to it they were carried out.

"My uncle told you that?" cried Sophy, incredulously. And when he repeated Mr. Causton's words, she looked at him strangely. She saw at once that he did not understand their significance. A faint flush stole to her cheek. When Wesley left her, after an hour's quiet talk, she was more composed, and had resigned herself to obey orders.

Mr. Wesley went to Mr. Oglethorpe the next morning, and asked :

"Sir, in what boat is Miss Sophy to go?"

Oglethorpe looked up quickly :

"Sir," said he, "she can go in none but yours. Indeed, there is none so proper."

CHAPTER X

THE ENCHANTED INTERLUDE

JOHN WESLEY received Oglethorpe's order with an emotion in which astonishment mingled with a wild and heart-shaking joy. She was to accompany him, not by his own contrivance, but by an official edict which there could be no gainsaying. She was to be with him, under his protection. He was to be with her, to see her hourly. He could talk to her, read to her, instruct her, hear her low-voiced replies, meet the sweet sincerity of her modest eyes, watch her own grave smile ; all this, with none to listen, spy, report ! At thought of it he discovered so immense a delight, felt such a tumultuous inrush of emotion, that the flood of his happiness almost succeeded in drowning his uneasy clericalism. For a brief, enchanted interlude, a sunlit pause, John Wesley was become like other men, a very human lover, quivering with the joy of being alone with his beloved.

When he threshed and winnowed his conscience, he yet had a good hope that he would be delivered out of this sweet danger, this perilous joy, since it had not been his own choice that had brought it upon him ; and he coddled the notion that he still perceived in himself his old desire and intention to live celibate. Further, he tried to believe he believed Sophy's statement, which all young girls make to all men at the beginning of their more intimate acquaintance, that her resolve was to live unmarried. He wished to believe that this resolution of

hers would hold fast even though his own wavered. So much he understood a girl's heart ; so much he understood his own !

The thought of Sophy invaded him even at his prayers. She appeared, a tender and seductive vision, with sweet, persuasive lips and ardent eyes ; and this occasioned him so profound a pleasure that he was terrified. He knew it for a snare of the devil, and redoubled his prayers. But as if the heavens were deaf, he was unable to quell the passion that shook and tormented him. He forgot that he was at high noon and high tide, son of a cleric who begot nineteen children, grandson of another who begot twenty-five. And he was afraid. He was dreadfully afraid.

Sophy had had a season of calm happiness with the Hirds, whose religion was of the heart. She did not wish to return to Savannah, to her uncle's all too competent bullying, her aunt's querulous railings, and Tom Mellil-champ's ferocious wooings and savage threats :

—“ Sophy ! You are remembering what I've told you, aren't you ? ”

—“ I am remembering all the time that you are cruel, Tommy, to torment me so ! How can you love me, when you torment me so ? ”

—“ I love you in my own way. And you had better remember it. The day you dare to forget it, somebody's going to die.”

“ Tommy—” Tears of terror overflowed.

Of a sudden, he caught her to him roughly, and kissed her on the lips again and again, with a sort of ferocious tenderness.

“ That's how I love you, Sophy,” he whispered, and would have kissed her again, but she pushed him off.

“ You aren't cold, Sophy,” he said, coolly. “ You're

only—afraid of me. Why don't you let yourself love me?"

"Why don't I let myself hate you!" she cried.

"Because you're going to marry me," he told her, with something of a swagger.

"Tommy," said she, quietly, "I shall never marry you. Never."

His eyes narrowed. "You shan't marry anybody else, then."

"I don't know that I wish to marry anybody else. But I do know I shall never marry you. Never, never!" And she had turned and fled, leaving him staring after her.

When Sophy thought of that scene, she trembled, and was loath to return to Savannah, fearing a repetition. But her friend Miss Fossett was to be married, and Sophy felt that she could no longer expect the same undivided friendship. For this reason, she did not wish to remain at Frederica, particularly after Wesley's departure. The Hirds had been more than kind, they had been very good to her, and she had been happy with them; but she was not part of their daily life, she had no real claim upon them. Her departure would make no difference. Indeed, she could not but think that the real bond between them and herself was their common affection for John Wesley, and the minister's interest in her. Wesley perforce bounded her present horizon; because of him her life had been made bearable. Where, or to whom, could she look for help, for friendship, or for counsel, but to John Wesley?

Oglethorpe stood to Sophy as the representative of the King. She had the utmost admiration and respect for him, and no thought of crossing or disobeying him could have entered her mind. She had had an order from Oglethorpe himself, the secret of which she kept locked in her own breast, for it concerned John Wesley.

A day or two before, she had been walking alone near the fort, and Oglethorpe had stopped in passing and joined her for a few moments, greeting her with the smile he always had for women. The young girl looked up at him with timid admiration—he was, she thought, the handsomest gentleman she had ever seen.

“ Miss Sophy,” said the soldier, bending his tall head, “ I wonder if you’d be willing to do something for me—as a great favour ? ”

“ Oh, yes ! ” cried Sophy, so instantly, that he smiled again.

“ Then I shall ask you—as a great favour to me—to make things as pleasant as you can for Mr. John Wesley, whenever you have the opportunity.” And seeing her astonishment, he added impressively :

“ Mr. John Wesley is such a man as we need and want here in the colony. He is a very valuable asset, and we must do what we can to keep him with us. We must make the colony pleasant enough for him not to want to leave it, don’t you see ? I am afraid he is too . . . lonesome. Too busy with parish affairs. Not enough *human* relations, let us say. Now I consider it better for him to associate more with young people, young ladies especially. I observe that he seems to have formed quite a friendship with you.”

Sophy looked up with startled eyes, and blushed vividly.

“ I approve of Mr. Wesley’s friendship with you so much, Miss Sophy, that I am going to ask you to retain it under any circumstances,” said Oglethorpe, with an emphasis which surprised her more and more. “ If you are called upon in the course of this friendship to stretch a point in Mr. Wesley’s favour, don’t hesitate to do so—to please me, and for the good of the colony. That is the favour I am asking of you.”

"I respect and revere Mr. Wesley," said Sophy, in a low voice.

"You are a highly intelligent young lady," said Oglethorpe, bowing. "I am sure you will understand that it will be better to keep this conversation a secret between you and me. Our dear friends—gossip."

"Oh, good gracious, yes, sir!" cried Sophy, so earnestly that he laughed.

"I am sending you back to Savannah in Mr. Wesley's care, Miss Sophy," said the Governor, mentioning the fact casually enough, but looking at her with smiling eyes. "May I say I trust that the voyage will be a safe and pleasant one for you both?"

"I think you may say that much, sir," said Sophy, as he bowed his splendid head over her hand, then, saluting her with a stately flourish of his cocked hat, swung off, walking like the great soldier he was. She looked after him a little wistfully, as all women look at men like James Edward Oglethorpe, who was everything he should be, and several things he shouldn't.

Oglethorpe stood for the King. John Wesley represented Divine Providence. Sophy resigned herself to obey without question whatever those two told her to do. She was naturally obedient, a girl-child whom no father, husband, brother, or any man in authority over her would ever find anything but tractable. This was one of her most potent charms for John Wesley.

On the morning of their departure, as had been planned, Wesley performed the marriage ceremony between Miss Fossett and Mr. Weston, afterwards reading and preaching. Sophy's eyes filled with sudden tears as she watched her friends' radiant happiness, knowing her own lines cast in such uncertain places. The preacher's words for once went idly over her head; she could not focus her attention

upon them. She sat still, watching John Wesley's slender and erect figure, his firm lips which had so unexpectedly sweet a smile—perhaps because his chin had that unexpected cleft in it? It came to her, with a start, that she was beginning to like him very much—more, much more, than she had realized. Sometimes she found herself thinking of him intensely, and she longed to see him, to hear him, to be with him. When she was with him, she experienced a happiness that no one else was able to give her. Suppose, now . . . Well, he did seem to like her. . . . Her thoughts wandered. She fell into a day-dream. Presently she started, and blushed, the rosy colour staining her, brow to bosom. It was wicked to—think things—like that.

Everything being ready, they set out at noon. The day was Monday, in the latter part of October, cool and sunny, with a light, thin haze over the wooded shores of the islands, and a gay wind clashing the spears of the marsh grass. They had with them the usual boat crew, and the boy Jemmy, whom Wesley had brought with him from Savannah, and who now returned with his master. Wesley and Sophy were the only passengers. Oglethorpe had so arranged it.

All that afternoon they swept down the beautiful tidal rivers, which are sometimes only a branch of the sea, sometimes a tortuous narrow passage between the shores of the islands and the mainland. An ineffable glory lay on land and sea; every object stood out, not so much outlined in light as part of it, living in and with it.

It seemed to John Wesley that he, too, was in and of this ineffable light, in which he saw all things with newer, fresher eyes. It was as if he perceived the reality of reality; as if colour had become audible and sound

visible. The blue days burned with beauty, the velvet nights, gold with stars and silver with moonlight, throbbed with beauty, the miles of the marsh breathed it, the never-silent voice of the sea crooned it endlessly. Beauty ! And she who was the very spirit of it was with him. It seemed to him that the pines with their high and airy voices murmured to one another, *Sophy ! Sophy !* and the tidewater lipping the land chuckled, in a hoarser, lower tone, *Sophy ! Sophy !* and the wind in the long, long miles of the marshes stirred the tall grasses to a sly, sweet *Sophy ! Sophy !* And surely every redbird and mockingbird was fluting *Sophy ! Sophy ! Sophy !* too.

He had brought along with him the inevitable books—Bishop Patrick's “Prayers,” and Fleury's “Manners of the Ancient Christians”—the latter for Sophy's special benefit, as “setting before her such glorious worthies, who resisted unto blood, striving against sin.” He read them to her to the bitter end ; but every now and then lifting his eyes to look into hers.

He thought that, of all the eyes he had ever looked into, Sophy's eyes were woman-eyes. You would know, if they were detached from all personality, and shone all by themselves like a pair of stars in the evening sky, that these were woman-eyes. You would know, at first glance, that they couldn't be a young man's, or a boy's—there was no slightest hint in them of anything boyish ; they were always woman-eyes. They could give you only a woman's look, soft, mild, appealing, the look of a maiden to her lover, a wife to her husband, a daughter to her father, a mother to her son. Such were Sophy's eyes to John Wesley.

He prayed, and she bowed her head, murmuring responses. He sang and her voice followed his. They rowed long distances, to save them from the cramped

weariness of inaction. Sometimes, to rest their stiffened limbs, they landed on an island shore and walked among sea-myrtles and sassafras and cedars, among trees which shed about them a green light, reflecting the same green in the waters which edged the land.

The nights were taking on an edge ; the sunsets had been red ; frothy whitecaps showed on the rushing river, the wind in the marshes rose to a loud humming. As the darkness grew, stars showed through racing clouds. It was almost November, and every day autumn glories deepened as summer glories departed. Every night now the travellers, landing, built a fire and sat around it, drowsily sniffing the odour of pines and burning cedar-wood. They relished their food, to which days in the open, nights under the sky, gave so keen a relish. One night Jemmy and the boatmen got some oysters, which they roasted, and Wesley ate them with Sophy. As a rule, however, he adhered to his austere diet of bread and water, with an occasional bit of cheese.

While they sat by the evening fire he would talk, and the young girl was intelligent enough to value the noble breadth and sweep of an intellect like none other she had ever known. She did not always understand him—she was too young ; but she reverenced him, and she felt exalted that he should so openly show his regard for her. It pleased her innate feminine vanity, it gave her a taste of the terrible power of women. But when, with his direct simplicity, he would presently say, "*Let us pray,*" her girlish vanity gave place to a sort of awe.

At such times she watched him with a sort of beautiful astonishment. Her eyes would trail over the other members of their party, kneeling near by, and steal back again to John Wesley, so far above, so far removed from them all. Was there ever another like him, this saintly clergy-

man, this astonishing scholar, who, as might some visitor from another planet, bent to her humbler sphere? What was it drew him to her? Beauty? But he, too, had that. Youth? He was not by any means an old man, though to eighteen thirty-three seems a trifle ancient. What, then, drew him to her? For she knew in her heart that he sought her, was eager to please her, wished to be with her, looked at her with a young man's eager eyes. Her heart fluttered; the awe gradually melted. Under her down-dropped lids her eyes sparkled with a light that was not religious, and her mouth curved to a secret, flying smile. Sophy was very human, and a woman as well.

The long, sunlit days; the long, grey days; the star-lighted nights; the black nights when the stars were hidden; were all part of this enchanted interlude, and came, and went, dreamlike. But every night had an added edge, and every night the fire was more welcome.

One night the boat's sail was spread over four sharpened stakes driven in the ground, for a protection against the heavy, chill dew. Under this shelter Sophy, Jemmy, and Wesley placed themselves on the one side, and on the other the boat's crew huddled together for warmth. A high northeaster was blowing over the coast country, and the night grew piercingly cold. Through the darkness could be seen the phosphorescent flash of the tidewater whipped by the gale. Huge clouds tumbled and merged and parted overhead, with sometimes a murky star showing in a rift. From the distance came the far, softened roar of breakers, and the night was full of the complaints of trees mishandled by the wind and resenting it. The sail flapped, lifted, sank, flapped, lifted, sank, straining at the posts which held it. The world of the coast country had given vent to its innate wildness.

"Miss Sophy, are you sure you are not uncomfortable?" asked Wesley anxiously.

"No," she spoke almost inaudibly. She had had many singular experiences, endured many hardships, since coming to Georgia; but this night, in the wild winds, with nothing but that piece of straining sailcloth for a roof, a crew of dog-tired men lying like logs around her, all dead with sleep except John Wesley, who lay between her and the others, seemed to her the most incredible she was ever to know; as if she had been plunged into some unbelievable, thrilling dream. Her mind was a mixture of amazement and a sort of fierce, tingling pleasure. Not for worlds would she have chosen it; but now that she was experiencing it, not for worlds would she have missed it.

She was lying on the ground, on a bed of pine-needles, her cloak her coverlet, her arm her pillow. She could see, at every upward twist and strain of the sailcloth, the black struggling masses that were trees tormented by the fury of the wind, and, higher yet, the misshapen masses that were clouds tossed and tumbled across the dark skies. At intervals the campfire, which had been allowed to dwindle but not die out, smouldered, flickered, shot up wavering and uncertain flames, which rose and fell as the wind caught them.

She lay like one in a trance, and near her, wrapped in his cloak, lay Wesley; on the other side of him the boy Jemmy slept as only a boy can sleep. At times Wesley raised himself upon an elbow, to see if she were comfortable. She pretended sleep, but at every movement of his her heart beat suffocatingly. She wondered if he could hear her heart? It seemed to have joined the noises of the night, to rise above them, to be a drum to which all other sounds sought to attune themselves.

If the girl was so conscious of the man's presence, the man was even more acutely conscious of the girl's. His whole being was like a taut string. It was as if the whole universe had narrowed and dwindled into that little circle which contained just themselves, a man and a woman. Or was it, maybe, that that little circle had widened and spread out and out and out from them, until it embraced all space, enfolded the universe?

He seemed of a sudden to have become possessed of some unimaginable sixth sense, in which consciousness merged into sensation so poignant that his breath stilled in his breast under the impact. And lying moveless, his whole being, body and soul, melted into one exquisite sense, the sense of touch. He felt his whole being touch her at every pore, and his heart leaped and danced . . . faster . . . faster . . . with ecstatic bounds . . . like David . . . leaping and dancing . . . before the Ark . . . of the . . . Lord God.

The rhythm of the night, to him as to her, seemed to fall into step to those wild high heart-beats, the vastness strained like a labouring breast, the wind was a passionate cry unloosed from some immeasurable throat. These two lying so near, yet untouched, were filled with an immense awareness, in which was held the ultimate of all things. . . .

She, who was the simpler, who was content with the common lot, presently relaxed, grew drowsy . . . drowsier. . . .

Everything . . . confusing . . . one . . . doesn't . . . know . . .

*He maketh me . . . to lie down . . . in green pastures ;
He . . . leadeth me . . . beside . . . still . . . waters.*

All sounds, all sensations, died away. The universe faded into sleep.

But he, who had for years sought to extend the reprobating consequence of primitive Christian doctrine and its morose Deity to his own body, and whose body was desperately seeking to slip off that galling slavery, was so stirred and moved, that he was forced to pray with more than usual fervour against the power of the carnal mind before he, too, slept.

And in his dreams Sophy slept beside him and the breast of the beloved lay against the breast that loved her.

CHAPTER XI

THE ENCHANTED INTERLUDE (CONTINUED)

IN the morning the wind was still high, and as they crossed one of the sounds the boat pitched and tossed dangerously. Wesley had always been mortally afraid of the sea, and every experience he had had with it increased his dislike for it. He could never overcome this terror, though he was ashamed of it, and ashamed now to let Sophy see it. As the boat wallowed in the trough of the waves, he asked nervously :

“ Miss Sophy, are you afraid to die ? ”

She lifted mild eyes. “ No,” she told him, quietly. And then, thinking of her forlorn situation, the uncertainties and difficulties ahead of her in the Causton home, the threats of Mellichamp, she spoke with sombre passion :

“ Why should I be afraid to die ? I don’t wish to live any longer ! I wish God would let me go now ! ”

He stammered, with shaking lips :

“ Die ? You ? You ? ”

“ I should be at peace. I should have rest,” she said. “ In this world what can I expect ? I don’t look for anything—but misery.” And her lips quivered with the quick intense emotion of the very young.

The quivering lips, the appealing beauty, the drooping attitude, wrung his heart even in the midst of his fear for his own safety. He wished, though, that she had not uttered that rash thought aloud, and involuntarily his eyes

went back to the turbulent waste of waters. He began to pray.

That evening, the wind being still very contrary, they had to land on St. Catherine's Island, and there they were forced to remain for some days. The crew spent most of their time gathering and burning driftwood, for the north-easter had brought in its train a cold so piercing that it was necessary to keep the fire burning all night and day.

The beautiful and romantic island on which they encamped was now wild and uninhabited, though once the Spanish padres had had a flourishing Indian mission there, and the forests had echoed vesper bells and Latin chants and prayers. The mission had been burned, the padres murdered, the island given back to its native wilderness, though many shell-strewn camp sites showed that Indians still fished and feasted there at times. The boatmen were able to vary their scanty fare with game and oysters, so that they did not fret at the delay ; and Wesley, accepting it as an act of God, did not have sufficient cause to torment his conscience. Sophy welcomed any delay.

They took long walks together, he deliberately keeping conversation fixed upon religious topics. Every hour he prayed. Every hour he sang those fine hymns which he had translated, and had, as it were, made his own. He had time to observe her closely, and to subject her to the acid test of daily contact, now that they were for so many hours alone together. And Sophy stood the test. She was all that he could have asked for in a woman—and more. She was the keystone in the arch of his love life.

He was singularly ignorant of women, for he had tried to train himself to regard them as temptations to be shunned, or as souls to be saved. He had, naturally, been drawn to several women in his time, had looked at them with the romantic eyes of a susceptible young man, and

his feelings had on occasion been much warmer than friendship called for. But all these—even in the case of Betty Kirkham—had been mere episodes, leaving no scars and but slight traces upon his life ; they had been but preludes to the only real passion he was ever to know.

The glamour of those golden days in which he wandered with Sophy cast upon him an unforgettable enchantment of the heart.

He loved her. The more he observed her, the more she amazed him. He loved her. Everything that she was, that she did, that she thought, that she said, or left undone and unsaid, was right. She was like a perfect poem, like music itself. He could detect no flaw in her perfection. Her tall, slight, lovely shape, her delicate face, her eyes, the sweet seriousness of her talk and bearing, left him speechless with wonder. He did not know that women, so long as they are with the men they wish to be with, do not care a rush for anything else ; that, granting them their supreme desire, all places and conditions are indifferent to them. She suffered much from headaches, and though at times her lassitude, her unusual pallor and the shadows under her eyes betrayed her pain, she never allowed that pain to betray her serenity.

When his eyes, his face, expressed his tender concern, she smiled.

“ I give myself into God’s hands,” said Sophy, ever so gently. “ Indeed, I know I suffer far less than I deserve.” Maybe she believed it.

If she had been the most subtle and designing and worldly of women, she could not have bettered that, in dealing with such a man.

The northeaster went, sending Indian summer to the sea islands of Georgia. The air was an elixir of life, the skies a burning blueness. Birds were riotous, butterflies

of glorious colour quivered flamelike over flowers, the tidewater was jade and silver.

On such a day John Wesley walked with Sophy, as if they two had strayed into the land of the morning. Presently because she was tired, Sophy sat down beside a tiny spring, in the dappled shade of a thicket of sea-myrtle. Her face was tinted like a seashell ; her breast, partly concealed by her white kerchief, was like the breast of Spring. The sun beat upon the myrtles with pleasant warmth, the wind came and caressed them, and played with the little curls of the girl's bright hair.

Wesley had prayed with her, read to her, sung his hymns with an added fervour ; for it was easier for him to understand the love of God, now that he himself loved Sophy. His heart thrilled with tenderness, his ardent eyes reflected a lively delight. And as she met his gaze, something came into hers which made him realize the ineffable truth : *she cared. Sophy !*

He experienced that mingled agony and pleasure, such as only the truly ascetic, who are at the same time congenitally sensual, may feel : a mingling of heaven and earth, as if the push-and-pull forces of the universes had rushed together in a boiling vortex.

Presently, as if to lay the turbulent spirit which moved him, he entered upon the topic of Holiness, which seems to obsess the Christian mind. And as the ascetic in him feared he was in instant danger of losing this fine Holiness by becoming a natural human being, he held Holiness up to the young girl as a peculiar hope and grace, using all his powers of persuasion.

He wished with passion that she should love him ; he could not imagine anything more horrible than that Sophy should not love him. At the same time he was afraid, because he knew she did love him. Tied hand

and foot to the vows he had made for himself, he thought, subconsciously, that if Sophy did not hold fast to her own expressed determination to remain unwed, he was not going to be able to remain unmarried himself.

Sophy was unable to take more than a desultory interest in Holiness just then, being intensively occupied with living. She said demurely that it was very interesting, but she didn't know very much about that Holiness of which he spoke so glowingly, she was afraid it was above her. He must know she was only a young, ignorant, undisciplined girl, set in a thorny path, which, but for his own great kindness to her, would be even thornier. Here she raised her downcast eyes and let him have them. She wished, she said, that she could attain that state of grace, since he wished it for her. But this, she added, could only be possible if Mr. Wesley, out of his goodness and learning, would show her the way. Whatever he said, whatever he desired, she would try her poor little best to follow.

. . . And again she let him meet her eyes.

He wondered if, in all the world, there was ever so dear a creature as this? She was at once passionate and pure; she not only appealed to his senses, she touched the well-spring of his soul. When he compared her to all those other women he had fancied, of a sudden the best of them all appeared shrivelled and pale before the clear flame of this girl's perfection and artlessness. No, there was no other like Sophy. Not one, in all the world.

Only yesterday he had been talking about that curious aberration—twisting the truth to make it appear fairer, lying in order to do good. And she had said, with beguiling naïveté, that she was very often guilty of that selfsame fault herself! She had turned to him like a darling child confessing to little naughtinesses.

"I didn't really mean any harm, Mr. Wesley. I didn't see any real harm in it. It is such an unpleasant thing to tell unkind, unwelcome truths, it makes me so uncomfortable, that I—well, Mr. Wesley, I just find myself telling the kind untruth, to save people's feelings. You can't tell some truths and feel a like Christian—at least, I can't. And—and—I suppose, too, that sometimes when I did it, I wanted certain people I like and admire, to think well of me. I wanted to have them see me . . . at my best."

She hung her head, as was her way, and said, blushing deeply : "I have sometimes . . . lied like that . . . to you, Mr. Wesley."

For a moment he remained silent, as the import of this sank in. He could not find it in his heart to deal sternly with Sophy, who was sometimes guilty of telling that sort of lie to himself. He should at least have looked at her with Christian reproof, as a clergyman noted for the strictness of his views and the rigidity of his morals. But this touching simplicity which confessed a fault and at the same time confessed so much adoration for himself, made her appear at her best ; as perhaps Sophy may have known.

His eyes upon her were not the eyes of the ascetic minister ; they were the eyes of Sophy's lover, forgiving the sweet sins of his beloved. He had never seemed to her so human, so good, so dear, as at that moment. She added, with young intensity :

"Mr. Wesley ! I—I used to be a little—afraid of you ! But now you are so—so kind and so good, that you make me feel ashamed. I know now that all lying is wrong. I will never, never tell lies any more. Indeed, Mr. Wesley, I shan't. I will watch myself all the time and guard against it."

Two large tears rolled down her round cheek, as if to wash the dear penitent clean from the heinous sin of lying to save somebody's feelings ; and endeared her so much the more.

Indian Summer fled overnight, Autumn was come. They ventured to set out again, although the sea was extremely rough, driven by a wind that was almost a gale. Every moment the water broke over the boat ; the cold was piercing. The very aspect of the country had changed. Seen through tossing spume, the shores of the islands, the long slanting spears of the marshes, showed a savage beauty, an untamed desolation. There was nowhere any sign of human habitation. Nothing but the waters, the winds, the land. And it was as if this tremendous trio had united in one implacable mind, one cruel will, to join forces and thrust out these puny intruders upon their ancient freedom. Every moment it seemed that the boat would be swallowed up by the sea, which tossed and buffeted and beat her.

Wesley, struggling with his mortal fear, prayed and sang, the wind taking his voice and tossing it abroad like spray. But Sophy showed no concern and sat quietly in her place.

They could make no headway against such wind and sea. The boat put about and wallowed her way, rooting hoglike in the furrows of the sea, back to St. Catherine's. The men made the land with extreme difficulty, and the drenched, exhausted travellers thawed their half-frozen bodies beside a fire, and ate a scanty meal while the black and lonesome night came down upon them, and the sea bawled like a hungry beast swindled of its prey.

Sophy was too tired to sleep. She lay there supine. It was a night to make one restless, to conjure up unpleasant visions. With a sort of horrid intensity, every

disagreeable circumstance that had beset her, came and leered, and lurched, and danced in a sort of wretched ring around her. What was going to happen to her, she wondered bitterly? She had thought that John Wesley loved her; but did he love her enough to take her life into his keeping, and thus save her from the unbearable circumstances of daily living with the Caustons? Did he love her enough to save her from Mellichamp's brutal wooing? His eyes, his bearing, proclaimed more loudly than words that he did care, and deeply. He was not in the least light or flirtatious; but always Sophy divined in him a caution and uncertainty which troubled her, and even offended her. She could not understand.

Oglethorpe wished him to marry her. Her uncle was willing, her aunt, though she didn't care for Wesley, would raise no objections: she wished her niece married and off her hands. Sophy realized now that she herself cared for Wesley; she had for him a feeling that no other man could ever arouse in her. He, alone, knew how to call forth her best, her true self. But how much of this did he know, how much did he guess? Above all, how much did he care?

"Miss Sophy!" Wesley spoke softly. Perceiving by the light of the fire that she was awake, he had moved nearer her, and now, propped on an elbow, bent upon her a fixed regard.

She turned, with a great start. He asked abruptly:

"How far are you engaged to Mellichamp?"

"I have promised either to marry him, or to marry no one at all," she answered, with equal directness. But she did not tell him that this promise had been wrung from her with threats of murder, and that was why she had said she wished to remain unwed.

They remained motionless, breathing quickly. Pre-

sently the man said, as if under irresistible compulsion to utter his inmost thought :

“ Miss Sophy, I should think myself happy if I was to spend my life with you.”

“ You think . . . you mean . . .”

“ I know,” said Wesley. “ I tell you, I should be the happiest of men, if I could spend all my life with you.” And his whole being yearned for her.

“ Sophy ! ” he cried, “ I will make you happy, you shall be loved as much as ever man loved woman, if you will trust yourself to me, if you will love me, Sophy. I love you. I want you.”

Something in the white intensity of his face made her afraid. Something of the relentless power of him made itself dimly felt.

“ I . . . I . . . Ah, Mr. Wesley ! Do you think I could make you happy ? ”

“ Nobody else on earth but you ever can, Sophy.”

“ You are so high above me . . . in learning—”

“ *I love you.*”

“ Would I not be in your way at times, Mr. Wesley ? ”

He gave a low laugh at that. “ I love you, child.”

“ And I am—so young—so ignorant—while you—”

“ While I love you, Sophy.”

“ But, would you be happy with me . . . afterward ? I am so young ! ” she said, faintly.

“ Could you love me enough to give yourself to me, Sophy ? ”

She was, as she had said pitifully, very young. Could she, did she, love him enough to give herself to him for all her life ? How much they asked for . . . men ! She felt afraid. Of a sudden, behind the voice of Wesley, she seemed to hear the voice of Mellichamp. Unnerved, she burst into tears.

“ Oh, oh ! ” wept Sophy, “ I am in every way most unhappy ! I won’t have Tom. I can’t. He is ■ bad man, a cruel man. I won’t have him. And I can’t have anybody else ! ”

John Wesley sat up, drawing his cloak around him. He was distressed. She did not as a rule give way to her emotions, and this unexpected outburst affected him painfully, made him acutely uncomfortable. He knew not what to say, what to do ; indeed, he had a growing, horrid conviction that he had already said very much more than he should, of having been betrayed by carnal desires.

Sophy was saying, in a voice choked with sobs :

“ You don’t know the danger you are in, Mr. Wesley ! There have been . . . threats made against . . . against anybody that—that might speak to me—I beg you would speak no word more on this head.”

He had nothing to say and no desire to say it. He was distressed by his own behaviour, and more than a little bewildered by hers. But she, still weeping, went on artlessly :

“ When others have spoken to me on this subject, oh, I felt such an aversion to them I could hardly bear them near me. But I don’t feel anything like that to *you*, Mr. Wesley.” She tried to smile, with quivering lips and tearful eyes.

She added : “ So—we can talk upon any other subject as freely as ever.”

He, too, was remembering Mellichamp’s bitter jealousy, his threats, which a man of such intractable nature was more than apt to carry out, let the consequence be what it might. But Wesley was unafraid of Mellichamp’s passions : it was his own which gave him pause. His judgment, which made for caution, and his will which he had always tried to bend to the idea of celibacy, both

agreed with her advice to let the subject drop, even while he thrilled at the simplicity which he thought revealed her feelings for himself ; when others spoke to her of love she had felt for them only aversion ; but she had felt no such aversion for him ! As usual when he did not know what to do or say, and was afraid to trust himself, he took refuge in a psalm, Sophy singing it with him . . . though she wept as she sang.

The next day the weather again permitted them to use the boat. Both Wesley and Sophy carefully avoided any mention of what lay nearest their hearts. They took turns in rowing. They read, prayed, sang, engaged in grave and godly discourse. His desire for her person sharpened his desire to save her soul.

In the afternoon, all the company being weary, they went ashore and walked under the trees, and gathered wild flowers. The nearer they came to Savannah and the Caustons, the greater grew Sophy's uneasiness ; and as they walked together, she could not refrain from confiding her perturbation to Wesley : to whom else, indeed, could she turn for counsel ?

She began, not to complain of her aunt and uncle, but rather to explain the position in which she was placed in their house.

“ I can’t live in that house ! ” she exclaimed. “ I can’t bear the shocks I meet with there.” Her eyes besought him for aid.

Why did he not take her in his arms then and there ? Why did he not press upon her soft mouth the kiss of betrothal ? He loved her with the ardour, the hunger of long denial, such as only an ascetic can experience. Friendless, innocent, lovely, she moved John Wesley more profoundly than any woman ever had, ever could. Her exquisite immaturity appealed with an almost terrible

potency to his maturer years. Why did he withhold the words trembling upon his tongue ?

He was afraid ; he felt guilty, as though this love were sin. Was he not, indeed, betraying his Master by offering Him a divided allegiance, a divided heart ? The Lord thy God is a jealous God, who demands all. . . . No man can serve two masters—

“ I can’t live in that house ! I can’t bear it ! ” Sophy repeated, beating her hands together.

Of a sudden John Wesley fetched a long sighing breath, laid as it were a hand of iron upon himself, and, after a pause, managed to say with outward calmness :

“ Don’t be uneasy on that account. If you don’t care to live at Mr. Causton’s, surely some other arrangement can be made.”

She paused, her lips parted. Her hand stole to her heart.

“ You are, of course, welcome to a room at our house,” he said collectedly. The parsonage was indeed used as a guest house, and many took advantage of it in emergencies. “ Or better yet,” the voice droned on, “ and what I myself would consider most proper, would be for you to do what your aunt once proposed in my hearing . . . live in the house with the Germans.”

Her reply was an unintelligible murmur. He could propose this, who had wished to spend all his days with her, let her know he loved her, made it plain that he wished her to love him in return ! To her youth with its romance, its generosity, this calculating cautiousness revealed the differences in their ages, their sentiments, their temperaments. It came to her, painfully, that Tommy, with all his faults, wouldn’t have wished to send her to the Germans !

Thrown into close intimacy, Wesley had shared with

her the dangers and delights of an adventure which could befall very few. He had been the devoted friend, tender and protecting. He had loved her, and told her so. He understood the unhappiness of her circumstances, the perils which threatened her. And now, at such a time, he, with-drawing his protection as it were in alarm, coldly advised her to take refuge with—the Germans. . . . She felt bewildered. She couldn't understand.

In the evening they landed at another uninhabited place, some distance from Savannah. The provisions had failed, and they went supperless. There was no fire-wood, except the rotting stump of a tree, which refused to ignite. Sophy hung her apron on two sticks, which somewhat kept the north wind off her head, and lay upon the ground, under the open sky. It seemed to her that she was a castaway, and that the present situation was in keeping with her feelings and her fate. She accepted it silently. There was nothing to be said.

“ You seem perfectly contented with your hard bed, Miss Sophy,” ventured Wesley, with admiration. All day she had taken her tone from his, and the conversation between them had been guardedly impersonal. She made no reply now, but smiled vaguely, and pretended sleepiness. It was only when the darkness deepened that she permitted her tears of mortification and disappointment to flow unchecked.

She began to marshal the facts, to try to acquire light upon Mr. Wesley’s character in relation to herself. She couldn’t understand. Yet her pride forbade her to show any change in her attitude toward him. She would be just as she had always been, she decided, but she, too, must be on her guard. She did not attempt to deny to herself that she might love him ; but even if she had not admitted it, as he had admitted he loved her, he must

realize that she was not indifferent to him, and he shouldn't blow hot and cold. Her pride was wounded. A touch of resentment crept into her heart.

And so they came to Thunderbolt, and here it was agreed that he should walk to Savannah through the woods, and meet her there at the landing.

CHAPTER XII

MY BELOVED I

IF one had asked him, even at that time, "What do you really want? What do you demand of life?" he would have answered instantly, with all sincerity, *God*. All passionately religious souls would attain to God. John Wesley's inherent desire, then, was to attain to God. And God was reflected in the cloudy mirror of his own unconscious religious mysticism. In this cloudy mirror was also projected another shadow, the *vraisemblance* of John Wesley's Self. It followed that, like all mystics, he must at times mistake the reflected Self of the one for the divine Mind of the other.

The age in which he appeared, that cynical and calculating age which doubted everything and believed nothing, did not lend itself kindly to mysticism, or even, indeed, to religion. The very nature and climate of his people and country militated against it. If, for instance, William Law had said to John Wesley: "My friend, you, too, are a mystic"—Wesley would have recoiled. Mysticism is the romance of religion, and Wesley wished to be, and was to a great extent, practical.

He wished to organize, to act. He had the dynamic efficiency of Loyola rather than the rapturous insight of John of the Cross. The great Spaniard could, by the sheer force of his blazing faith, halt the armies of Protestantism at the moment of their apparent triumph, and standing on the confines of the Latin world, brandish

a crucifix and shout, *They shall not pass!* The great Englishman would . . . after awhile . . . by that same force of faith halt the progress of religious dry-rot in his own nation, shake a moribund Church out of the grave-clothes in which it was shrouded, reanimate the paralyzed conscience of an age, and reawaken a comprehensible and living faith in the hearts of the common people.

For some years the thought of the hidden life had made to him an ineluctable appeal—because he feared that the world could not give him that which he most desired. Had he been a Roman Catholic, his way would have been simple. The Church of England, a unit of the Church Catholic, would not and could not disavow the saints and mystics whom she, too, could claim as a glorious part of her heritage. But Rome, to whom belonged the Latin world with all its artists, and with its more sensuous and colourful life, would always look upon that phase of what is called the religious life with a more understanding and sympathetic regard. Rome offered in her monasteries and her convents an asylum for souls subject to that divine epilepsy, souls that, swooning in a love-ecstasy in the arms of the Heavenly Lover, repeat whispered words, reveal ineffable secrets . . . pearls to be caught up and treasured by the living Church. England offered no such sanctuaries. Her saints must be in the world, of the world.

Wesley, then—and maybe Loyola as well—might be called, for want of a better term, an objective mystic, / might be said to represent the obverse and active side of that shield, of which the reverse side shows, say, Santa Teresa, John of the Cross, Francis, Madame Guyon, Jacob Boehme, maybe Pascal. Why not? They, too, could be astonishingly practical. That same Teresa of Jesus, who . . . “represents the common sense, the discreet enthusiasm of devotion, and the interior life

which distinguishes Catholic ascetism and the mysticism of the saints . . ." had a good, hard business head as well, and not only founded convents but managed them. Francis de Sales made an excellent working Bishop of Grenoble. Catherine of Siena ran a hospital with marked efficiency. Xavier instituted modern missionary methods. Loyola organized for Rome the terrific weaponless army of the Society of Jesus.

The tense little English priest was kin to them all, though closest in character and organizing power, perhaps, to Loyola, having the like terrifying will to do and energy to accomplish. In them all the self-same spirit moved and motivated—the impelling need to express and realize themselves, to achieve their goal at whatever cost in suffering and abasements to themselves. They all cry with Xavier : "*Still more, Oh, Lord, still more : greater trials, heavier crosses !*" and with Teresa, "*Either to suffer, or to die !*" They all desire, with Augustine, "*to go to God, to die to self, to love, to be united to God.*" They all feel that their heart is, as it were, an abyss which God alone can fill.

Here was the true stream and undercurrent of John Wesley's being. In the open it might at times manifest itself as his singular superstition, which always kept a ghostly door ajar. For he was of all men the greediest for the marvellous. He would accept things which lesser intelligences shrugged aside with a smile or a sigh.

He practiced sortilege ; he cast lots ; he hunted avidly for signs and omens, discovering them in the most absurd trivialities. It was not too much for him to believe that the Lord God Omnipotent, Creator of Heaven and earth, could and would pause in the business of running all His universes to guide and direct John Wesley's finger opening at random a page of one of earth's many bibles.

Why not? Why should not the Almighty show His selected agent what he should or should not be or do or have? Was not this agent under the direct, jealous regard of Jehovah-jireh, was he not a man with a Mission, and hence were not the affairs of his daily life of at least as much importance to the Creator as they were to the man himself?

He was narrow, because there was as yet no selfless love in him. He could not yet forget the beloved I. And so he never had any of those great experiences, in which the soul, consumed with selfless passion, reposes upon the bosom of the Great Lover, and becomes one with the essence of the divine flame in which she burns. For he was not born in the splendid Sixteenth Century, and Latin, but in the arid Eighteenth, and English; and even mysticism, that anarchy of the spirit, must like all human experiences submit to the laws of its own being and follow the lines of time, climate, and individual temperament.

Yet John Wesley had his own solemn spiritual adventures, as, for instance, that once when he had so ardently and intensely longed to see Sophy, and hung in horrid doubt whether to go to her, or to resume the journey he had set for himself. And while he walked to and fro on the banks of the Savannah River, heavy laden, pierced through with many sorrows, One came to him and said, " You are still in doubt as to what is best to be done. First, then, cry to God, that you may be wholly resigned, whatever shall appear to be His will."

" I instantly cried to God for resignation, and I found that and peace together. I said, ' Surely it is a dream! ' I was in a new world. The change was as from death to life. I went back, wondering and rejoicing."

And the change was indeed as from death to life, for the decision had been made for him; he knew what he

really wished and meant to do. He experienced a profound peace ; he had the inconceivable sweet assurance of a divine Power directly guiding him, and it was as if his mortal eyes were for a moment touched with some immortal dew, so that he saw with an early morning freshness of vision. It was an exquisite experience, and it was genuine. The experience is always genuine. *But the interpretation varies.*

If John Wesley missed, then, the ecstasies and exaltations, he had the true mystic's homesick longing for God. And he knew and shared with them the same fierce struggle to subdue the flesh, believing, like them, that to attain the supernatural he must crucify the natural. The world and the devil are deadly enough, but not unconquerable ; the flesh remains intractable to the last.

To this eager, ardent, self-engrossed temperament, so aggressive and at the same time so eager to attain humility, all things were the means toward the one end of saving his own soul—all things, except passivity. Inaction he could not endure, any more than he could have endured subserviency. He could no more have tamely submitted, for any great length of time, to the hard and fast ritualism, the formal discipline, of the Church of England, nor submitted his intelligence to the rule of its bishops, than could a mountain torrent confine itself within the compass of a hand-basin. Inevitably he must have created bishops of his own choosing, to do what he told them, go where he sent them. That arid formalism which held him in thrall for so many years was in reality only a phase of John Wesley's spiritual evolution : he had to plumb ritualism until its dry bones rattled and crumbled in his grasp, to learn that the rattle of dead bones is not the voice of the living God.

High-strung, nervous, never robust, at times threatened

with a consumption, he desired always to set his frail body at naught, to force it slavelike to obey his will, to frustrate and despise it ; and by the force of his will he did indeed so train and discipline this weakly body that, resilient and full of nervous energy, it became capable of almost superhuman exertions, of incredible feats of endurance, tests which would have shattered more robust men. This he regarded as a special grace of God. May be it was.

But if he despised the flesh and its joys, it was not because the flesh and its joys were distasteful and indifferent to him. They were so far otherwise that they terrified him by their clamours, their insistent demands, their unconquerableness. And he thought, if the flesh, the body, that fleeting phantom of the illusory senses, could offer such ensnaring delights, what could not the soul, so much more open to so much more exquisite pleasures, have to offer ? And that he might attain to these so much greater joys which the soul offered, he would deny the body those joys for which it lusted so insatiably.

The key to that attainment was chastity. He could conceive no way else. Holding chastity his pure ideal, he wished to surrender himself completely to the will of God, and thus be relieved of those gnawing desires of the carnal mind, which is enmity to God. A pure man, he would fulfill his mission. He would be an apostle, a missionary. In other words, he would gratify his subconscious desire, become superior to ordinary humanity. He would be humble and tractable because he was that proudest and most intractable of all human beings, an intellectual and passionate man obsessed with the belief that the Almighty had singled him out from among all his fellows.

This conviction had haunted him all his life. This it was that had sustained him when, a poor scholar at Oxford, his pride would have been mortally wounded by what, without this sense of his own superiority, he must have admitted were his worldly betters. That apocryphal " Better to rule in hell than to serve in heaven, Mr. Tooke ! " expressed him more subtly than his friends liked to admit.

There was never a time when he did not hunger with all his heart to be and to do good. He would serve God and save man ; but he could not realize, as yet, that he really loved neither, seeing in both only the opportunity for his own particular salvation. His underlying thought was ever for himself—my beloved I—his chief motive the fear of hell and the hope of heaven. There was not in this enormous selfishness any sense of hypocrisy, for he had no sense of humour. He could no more laugh at himself than he could imagine the Most High engaging in a fit of giggles.

He subjected himself as well as others to a bleak intolerable sacerdotalism. He was charitable to all who needed it, friends and foes alike. He was more than generous in giving. He would give his goods to the poor ; he would give his body to be burned ; he would have all knowledge, know all tongues, be head and shoulders above all Israel in intellect and personal prepossessions, and with horrible humility count these gracious gifts as dung, for Christ's sake ; he would fast, pray, submit his frail carcase to the macerations as of a medieval monk with an inflamed conscience ; he would do anything and everything for God and man, with no other gesture than that of registering it in the exact daily record of his personal behaviour. But swerve one hair's breadth from his predetermined way he would not and he could not.

He had not escaped being tormented by the natural sex-cravings of youth, but these his conscience forbade him to satisfy. It was frightful to him that he, who had glimpsed and savoured the higher life, should be tempted by impulses and desires which emanated from the depths. Denied natural outlets, these unsatisfied, natural desires grew by repression and frustration into a monstrous inhibition, always preying upon his fine common sense.

Sex was sin. A peculiarly heinous sin. For he found himself, particularly at prayers, beset by impure thoughts and suggestions, by tender and voluptuous shapes, in which he did not perceive his own inhibitions and frustrations, but the artifices of the Devil. Natural sex desire assumed the horrific visage of the Sin against the Holy Ghost, the Sin beyond pardon, the mark of the beast, because of which the face of the Father was changed into the implacable fierce countenance of the Judge. To conquer the recalcitrant body was, then, the great victory, over which the angelic hosts rejoice. To do the will of God, one must be physically chaste ; to be physically chaste, one must remain celibate.

A man of very strong feelings and emotions, John Wesley, felt the need of tenderness and recognition. Woman alone, pure, tender, religious—and obedient—could satisfy these deep needs, could console and understand him. Had he been a Latin, he could have escaped by flying to the feet of Mary, the Virgin, the Mother, and placing his turbulent heart in her fair hands. But that ideal of womanhood was out of his reach. A Protestant Christian could not stay his heart upon Mariolatry. Yet less than that perfection could not satisfy John Wesley's spiritual thirst, nor reassure his fearful mind, which recoiled from the fact that one fair girl could altogether stay his body's hunger for love.

Had he loved the girl less passionately, or had she been older, he would not have feared her so much ; for he would not have been afraid to take an older woman in marriage, as an act of expediency, somewhat as one might have put on a flannel shirt in a chill. Had there been no passion, no glamour, there would have been no terror of sin . . . only two stodgy Christians ambling heavenward in a sort of second-hand celibacy.

But as it was now, Sophy with the dew of her youth sparkling on her bright hair, threatened his God-ordained mission—whatever it might prove to be—and so endangered his freedom, and his pride of supremacy, that his colossal selfishness saw in her the Great Temptation.

He might talk of sacrifice ; but to any artist, any priest, any professional man, nothing can be a sacrifice that does not call upon him to give upon his work. There is no sacrifice in letting go anything that might interrupt or endanger that work. And all mystics are in a very fine sense artists in life. From the day he stepped out of his cradle, John Wesley had been at work moulding and fashioning and shaping his life in his own image and likeness, in his own way, to his own ends. Against that enormous egoism, what chance had any mortal woman ?

CHAPTER XIII

JEALOUSY

From the Journal of John Wesley :

November 1, Monday. She was eighteen years old. And from the beginning of our intimate acquaintance until this day, I verily believe she used no guile : not only because even now I know no instance to the contrary, not only because the simplicity of her behaviour was a constant voucher for her sincerity ; but because of the entire openness of all her conversation, answering whatever questions I proposed, without either hesitation or reserve, immediately and directly. Another thing I was much pleased with in her was, that whenever we were conversing or reading, there was such a stillness in her whole behaviour, scarce stirring hand or foot, that "she seemed to be, all but her attention, dead." Yet at other times she was all life—active, diligent, indefatigable ; always doing something, and doing with all her might whatever her hand found to do. For indeed, if the weakness of her body did not, her sense of honour would not hinder her doing anything.

Nor did she at all favour herself on account of that weakness ; she could not remove, she would not indulge it. Softness and tenderness of this sort she would not know, having left the delicacy of the gentlewoman in England. She utterly despised those inconveniences which women of condition in England would think worse than death. With bread to eat and water to drink she

was content ; indeed, she never used any drink beside water. She was patient of labour, of cold, heat, wet, of badness of food, or of want ; and of pain to an eminent degree, it never making any alteration in her speech or behaviour, so that her frequent headache was only to be discerned by her paleness and the dullness of her eyes.

Though always neat, she was always plain. And she was equally careless of finery in other things. It was use she considered, not show ; nor novelty either, being as little concerned for new as for fine or pretty things. The same disregard she had for what are called diversions, such as balls, dancing, visiting ; having no desire either to see or be seen, unless in order to be wiser or better.

Not that her love of retirement or want of curiosity was owing, as some supposed, to want of sense. Her constant, even seriousness was very far from stupidity. Indeed, her understanding was not of a piece with her years. Though unimproved, it was deep and strong. It reached the highest things and the lowest. It rose to the greatest, yet stooped to the least. With fine sense she had a large share of common sense, and particularly of prudence, suiting herself readily to all persons and occasions, nature in her supplying the place of experience. Her apprehension was so quick that there was scarce ever need to repeat a thing twice to her, and so clear as to conceive things the most remote from common life, without any mistake or confusion. But she was by no means fond of showing her sense ; seldom speaking when she could decently avoid it, and then in few words, but such as were clear and pertinent, and contained much in little compass. One reason of her speaking so seldom was the mean opinion she had of herself, particularly of her own understanding, which was also the great cause of her constant eagerness for instruction, and indeed for improvement of

every kind, as she was very sensible of her want of all. Hence too it was that she was so teachable in things either of a speculative or practical nature, so readily convinced of any error in her judgment or oversight in her behaviour, and so easily persuaded to lay aside her own designs or measures and pursue those which others advised. Indeed, one would almost have thought that she had no such ingredient in her nature as self-will.

As her humility was, so was her meekness. She seemed to have been born without anger. Her soul appeared to be wholly made up of mildness, gentleness, long-suffering. Then especially when she had to do with those who had injured her beyond the manner of men, she stayed for no entreaty before she forgave ; but of one thing she was not easily convinced, that any one needed her forgiveness or had done ill either to her or any other. She was with difficulty induced to believe any evil which she did not see. And even when she could not help believing, still she took care “ to speak evil of no man.”

And as her greatest enemies, so much more the greatest strangers had a share in her good will and affection. She was a friend to human kind. To whomever was distressed she was all sympathy, tenderness, compassion. But to any whom she particularly called a friend her behaviour can only be conceived, not expressed. Such was the spirit of gratitude that ran through it ; such the softness, the sweetness of every part of it ; yet still preserving in all that yielding easiness a modesty pure as the light.

The temper of her heart towards God is best known by Him “ who seeth in secret.” What appeared of it was a deep, even reverence ripening into love, and a resignation unshaken in one of the severest trials which human nature is exposed to. The utmost anguish never wrung from her a murmuring word. She saw the hand of God,

and was still. She said indeed, "If it be possible, Father!" but added, "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt!"

That is how John Wesley's pen pictured her, nor did he ever change that record. That is what she meant to him. And then he added :

"Such was the woman, according to my closest observation, of whom I now began to be much afraid. My desire and design still was to live single ; but how long it would continue, I knew not."

Immediately upon Mr. Wesley's return from Frederica Mr. Causton called upon him, expressing his and Mrs. Causton's great obligations for his kindness to their niece.

"Indeed," cried the magistrate heartily, holding his pastor's hand, "I protest, sir, that whatever you require in regard to Sophy, I shall consent to with all my heart. I dare pledge Mrs. Causton to agree with me. Sir, we are under vast obligations to you."

"Sir, my desire is always to help Miss Sophy. I shall wait upon you later, and tell you what I think should be done."

That evening Wesley went to the Causton house, and saw Sophy alone, her aunt and uncle being obligingly engaged. She was dressed in her accustomed white, and showed no trace of her recent long and fatiguing journey.

"Mr. Causton told me to-day he would agree to whatever plans I might make for your benefit. Miss Sophy, would you be willing still to be guided by me ?"

"I think I shall always be willing to be guided by you, Mr. Wesley," said Sophy. And as he outlined his plans for her, she assented.

"My plans for your niece," Wesley told the Caustons when they presently came in, "are briefly these : Miss Sophy must be allowed to come to the parsonage every

morning and evening, continuing her studies under my direction. When she is at home in your house, she shall never come into any company except by her own choice. I must insist too, that she shall be no more upbraided about Mellichamp—that undesirable person should not be so much as mentioned before her."

To these singular demands Causton agreed willingly enough, casting a look of admonition at his wife, who bridled.

"La, Mr. Wesley, I've got my own dear niece's good at heart, I hope!" cried Mrs. Causton effusively. "And I'm sure we are glad to have our Phiky go to the parsonage and be taught by a scholar like yourself. And she shan't have to see anybody here in my house she doesn't want to see. As for that wretch Tom Mellichamp, what she ever saw in him in the first place is more than I can see, as I've often taxed her with! Lord knows the scamp has troubled us enough with his threats and swearings, more like a murdering pirate on the high seas than a Christian man on the shore—and no wonder he got himself put in prison, it's where he ought to be, and I'm sure, Sophy, you don't need to squinch your eyes and frown at me about it, *I* didn't have anything to do with his getting into jail, did *I*? And shall you take any notice of his threats, Mr. Wesley?"

Mr. Wesley wouldn't. He could have said that the only person John Wesley feared was John Wesley. He and the Caustons parted amicably. Sophy had said nothing. When he was gone, Causton turned to the girl jovially.

"A fine chance for you," said he, and laughed. "A lady scholar is apt to learn all the faster if she likes her gentleman teacher. I warrant there's a thing or two *you* can teach the parson, Sophy!"

"I do respect and admire Mr. Wesley, uncle," said Sophy demurely.

"Well, every one to their own taste, as the old woman said when she kissed the cow," commented Mrs. Causton pursing her lips. "I'll do what I'm told, but if I was to do and say what I really think—"

"If you was allowed to do and say what you choose, you wouldn't make an end talking about nothing until judgment day," put in her husband. "I've told ye both 'tis the Governor's wish we shall be friends with Mr. Wesley. We shan't stand in your way, Sophy. You're a sensible girl enough, and as ye both wish to turn the parsonage into a schoolroom, go, i' God's name ! Your aunt shan't meddle—hark ye to that, Mrs. Causton !"

"My aunt never told me before she did not wish me to see Tom Mellichamp. She said only that she wished me to wed somebody—Tom as well as another," said Sophy, in a low voice. She could not forget the misery to which she had been subjected. "I—I thought she would not object to Tom."

"Mr. Oglethorpe would," said Causton, tartly. And he finished, with husbandly lovingkindness : "Your aunt's a fool."

Her aunt laughed shrilly. Rising, she shook out all her flounces, adjusted her cap, and made him a sweeping curtsey.

"I proved that the day I was married to *you*, Mr. Causton !" says she, and marched out of the room with her nose in the air.

Sophy wisely held her peace. Causton fell into a study. Things seemed to be shaping according to Oglethorpe's wishes, he reflected. Sophy going to the parsonage and being thrown into daily contact with Mr. Wesley would please the Governor mightily. Causton himself was

pleased. An alliance with John Wesley would be valuable enough. He turned to Sophy with a smile :

“ Begin in the morning, my girl. I’ll talk with your aunt to-night.”

And so Sophy heard services at five o’clock in the morning and afterward John Wesley walked and talked and prayed with her in the garden, she leaving when Ingham and Delamotte joined him.

Wesley had planned out her time. Immediately after breakfast, which Sophy shared, they all joined Hickes’ “ Devotions.” She was then alone until eight. Between eight and nine, Wesley taught her French, and at nine they joined in prayers again, after which she read or wrote French exercises until ten.

In the evening she came back, and he read to her and some other friends, selections from Efrem Syrus, and Dean Young’s and Mr. Reeves’ “ Sermons.” They always began and ended with a psalm.

He thought he meant that the relation between him and Sophy should be only that of a teacher and his pupil. But it was not long before he found it a task too hard for him to preserve the same intention with which he had started ; for they fell, naturally, into a close intimacy. He found himself more and more inclined to talk to her, to tell her things relating to himself. She listened with an absorbed attention ; only her beautiful eyes spoke for her. He would read her parts of his Journal. It seemed to her that she knew all his people intimately, was acquainted with all he had done, shared his thoughts. She was the perfect listener. That alone would have made any man love her !

He was ever at his best in a garden, and when she thought of him, when she remembered him, it was against this green background of trees and shrubs and flowers

and grass, under the blueness that was the Georgia sky. Already he had succeeded in making the place a bower of beauty and of peace. He had utilized every foot of his space to advantage, and there were small fruits and vegetables as well as flowers. There were hard green globes of cabbages, rows of English peas, potatoes, and turnips, bordered with green herbs. Wesley's garden always had a lovely touch of homeliness.

The happiest, holiest hours of Sophy's life were spent in the parsonage garden, while the slender, cassocked figure walked beside her. No man ever talked with a milder wit, a more polished grace, or a simpler truthfulness than John Wesley. And now, in the fresh early hours of the morning, he was talking to his beloved in his garden, her white dress brushing against his black cassock, her arm touching his, making him thrill and quiver. Whenever Sophy touched his hand, he felt her touch lingering there, long after she had gone. Sometimes it seemed to him that he could almost see the touch of her fingers on his flesh. It was a magic place, that Savannah garden.

He had had the usual strenuous day : services, lessons, languages, visits and visitings, prayers, preaching, letters, translations, Indians, Oglethorpe, his diary, his larger Journal ; and like a scarlet thread running through and brightening all the pattern, Sophy. Like a sweet clean wind blowing over all the gardens of the world, Sophy. Always his thoughts, his heart, came back to her. Sophy's bright head bent over a book. Sophy's face lifted to the morning light. Sophy in the garden, her white dress glimmering in the dusk. The heart of all his days was Sophy ; and he was perilously happy, and very much afraid.

Ingham accepted her without comment or resentment.

Busy with his plans for work among the Indians, he did not meddle with something so plainly outside his affairs as Sophy's presence in the parsonage. Ingham, more than any member of the Holy Club, had the grace of minding his own business. If he should be asked to give his opinion, being a truthful man he would give it. But until then, Ingham held his peace. Like Wesley, he was afraid of women. He thought Spangenberg's advice the soundest in the world : "Don't talk much with any woman ; but commend all good women to God." And he acted upon it, and had peace to his soul.

The more emotional Delamotte loved John Wesley with an almost idolatrous devotion. He had come to America to save his soul in John Wesley's company, not believing he could save it in any other. To him John Wesley was not only the leader, the fellow worker : he was teacher, friend, father ; he exercised over the young man, for whom he felt responsible, a tender and paternal care. And now Delamotte saw this ideal companionship threatened by the irruption of a girl, who took up John Wesley's invaluable time and occupied his mind and his heart. Delamotte did not trust women, and this one, he thought wretchedly, was too good to be true. He took it for granted she was trying to inveigle his adored friend into matrimony. If Wesley didn't look out, that girl was going to marry him ! Delamotte experienced a horrible jealousy, so bitter and grievous that it almost choked him.

"Mr. Ingham," he asked that amiable person, "do you like Miss Sophy ? "

"I do not dislike her."

"Do you trust her ? "

"I have at times thought that perhaps she may not be so pious as she appears to be," said Ingham cautiously.

" You remember how she came here and insisted on nursing him, day and night. . . . We didn't need her ! It was not modest ! Always here, dressed in white—to please him. Always here, morning, noon and night ! I—It torments me to see her here like this in her white frocks ! It gives just cause for talk . . . it has already given occasion for talk, Mr. Ingham ! Why can't he see the thing for himself ? What does she care for French, or for anything else ? She is a designing girl, she is setting a trap for him. She means to marry him, Mr. Ingham ! And I cannot bear it ! "

He walked up and down, twisting his hands. He had warned John Wesley against the handsome Mrs. Hawkins, against the insidious Mrs. Welch. Wesley had refused to listen—and see what had happened ! Now came this girl, so much younger, so much lovelier, so much more subtle, making so much greater an appeal.

" We must watch and pray," said Ingham seriously. " And if the spirit within directs you to do so, Mr. Delamotte, you might warn him--as a duty."

Free from jealousy himself, of an honest and equable temperament, Ingham did not fathom or even suspect the feeling that tortured Delamotte.

The voice within did urge Delamotte to warn Wesley against Sophy. He reminded him of Mrs. Hawkins and Mrs. Welch, of whom, against all warnings, he had cherished so firm a good opinion. Mr. Wesley, beware ! Else, to the great detriment of your work, and against your own conscience, you are going to wake up some morning and find yourself married !

Thus Delamotte in his ears, a voice of warning and complaint, like a bell upon shoals and sunken snags. And this voice, joining the uneasy voice within himself, gave Wesley sick qualms. He made resolutions. He re-

doubled his prayers. He consulted his friends the Germans, whether it was not better to break off all intercourse with her immediately? They expressed themselves so ambiguously that he understood them to mean that he ought not to break it off. The Germans, naturally, saw no reason why he should not marry. Why shouldn't he marry? They saw, with their simple wisdom, that celibacy is not essential to salvation; in fact often militates against a healthy spiritual life more than does sane sex experience. Celibacy, virginity, a state of physical being too overrated among sentimental unthinking Christians, is an excellent restrictive regulation, good enough when not overemphasized and unduly enforced; but is not, *per se*, virtue. Nature respects continence; she is apt to fill the unploughed, unsowed, and barren field with briars.

Steeped in clericalism, with the bones of the ancients hung around the neck of his soul, John Wesley made a fetish of celibacy. It was, he thought, the most potent means to the end he sought—the saving of his own soul. It never seemed to dawn upon him that he might be involving a young girl's happiness; nor did his own great selfishness occur to him. Men who seek heavenly riches are too often quite as ruthless and rapacious as they who are determined to gain the more obvious wealth of the world.

But while he gave no thought to his own share in Sophy's earthly happiness, he did wish to save her soul. Happiness this side the grave was too uncertain to take into one's calculations. And so he swung to and fro, and wavered and vacillated, and blew hot and blew cold, and wanted her to marry him and was terrified lest she should do just that, and tormented himself and her; he understood neither himself nor her, nor what he was really

doing, nor what it must inevitably lead to. He neither wished to hold on nor could bring himself to let go.

One thing he did do ; he worked as only John Wesley could work. Whenever Oglethorpe came to Savannah, his first call was upon Wesley for aid, and it was often Wesley's moral courage which stiffened the soldier's. Wesley acted as clerk for Oglethorpe, for instance, when the unlucky Governor had to sit upon the curious case of Dr. Tailfer, the surgeon, and the unhappy Rachel Ure.

This scoundrel, a Scotchman, when he lived in Edinburgh had debauched the young daughter of Mr. Ure, a lawyer, and his own distant kinsman. He then persuaded the girl Rachel to sign a paper which he did not allow her to read, and to come over to America with him. Because she loved him, was about to become the mother of his child, was afraid of her father's anger and wished to escape it, she followed her surgeon to Carolina, where her baby was born.

Tired of Rachel, who was a constant reminder of his own villainy, he treated her then as a common servant, venting his disgust upon her with a whip, and that so often that the scars of the lashings were visible a year later. His complaint was that her baby cried when he had company, and annoyed him. He kept Rachel for some two or three years, or until she had borne him another child, the first poor baby being by that time luckily dead. Then, having in the meantime met and married another woman, the gallant doctor sold Rachel Ure and her baby to an Indian trader.

When the case came up before Oglethorpe, both the doctor and Rachel Ure being present, Tailfer admitted the facts to be as stated, but denied flatly that he had sold the girl ; no, indeed, he hadn't ! He had simply given her away, made a present of her to the trader, thus pro-

viding for her and her baby and getting them off his hands and out of his house. He was a married man now : can a married man keep a concubine right under his wife's nose ?

Oglethorpe could do nothing to the doctor. But he ordered Rachel to be set at liberty at once, and that she should be given an allowance out of the public stores, and be free to work for herself and her child. There being no whipping-post in Georgia, and no law to meet such a case, the surgeon went back scatheless to his legal wife. But he did not forget John Wesley's share in this public uncovering of the case, nor the minister's open condemnation of him, and he bided his time. Having done his duty, and befriended the unfortunate woman, Wesley paid no further attention to the doctor.

One morning Sophy came to the parsonage accompanied by her aunt and a Mr. William Williamson. Wesley merely jotted it in his diary for the day, just as he always jotted anything or anybody touching Sophy. He was frightfully busy at the time, anyhow. Oglethorpe was going to England, and as the Governor thought nobody but John Wesley was capable of acting as his confidential secretary, he kept the parson busy from morning until night.

Anybody else would have complained. But Wesley had been born with an itch for letter-writing. He had written to his mother almost daily all his school life. He wrote letters on all occasions, sometimes of such length that they terrified the recipient and defeated their own object—as in the case of his voluminous letters to Beata Hawkins. He could therefore write letters for Oglethorpe as a duty, without thought of remuneration, and in the midst of his labours as a parish priest. He believed the Governor a deeply guilty man, and the Governor knew

it ; but this never for a moment interrupted their relations, nor prevented the one from calling for help and the other from instantly giving it.

Again the question of Wesley's going among the Indians came up, and again Oglethorpe promptly quashed it. Did Mr. Wesley wish to get himself scalped by Indians, or murdered by some band of Spaniards and Frenchmen ? The Germans, when consulted, agreed with Oglethorpe, that Mr. Wesley was too much needed in Savannah. He did not like deviating from his course, and he was not satisfied with Oglethorpe. Whenever he talked with the Indians, he saw how much they needed missionary work, though he didn't perceive his own unfitness for it. But he agreed to stay in Savannah for the present.

Ingham, still studying Indian tongues, was in Yamacraw, the Indian village alongside Savannah. He never got any further. When the Mico Tomochichi died, when the only son of Mary Musgrove died, they could be and were attended by the missionaries in Savannah, and given Christian rites and burial. Beyond this the Holy Club never got. Savannah held them.

Autumn was passing ; there was the nip of frost, then the bite of the cold, but the weather was heavenly. The days were shorter, the dark came earlier. When Sophy went home after the evening lesson, the reading, singing, and private prayers, it was dark in the sandy streets. She had not far to go, and there was no fear for her. But she had not been looking quite well of late, she was too pale, and she admitted more frequent headaches. Always interested in diet, Wesley came to the conclusion that she ate her supper too late ; she waited supper until after she had left the parsonage at night, then ate it at home immediately before going to bed. He did not, he told

her, consider that a healthful habit. No wonder she looked pale, and had headaches.

Sophy listened to him, who knew so much better than she, and agreed to do what he advised. She left the parsonage at an earlier hour, had an earlier supper with the Caustons, and did not immediately go to bed after the meal. This flung her more nearly into the normal stream of human living.

Mrs. Causton had never really liked John Wesley, who oppressed her with his rigid views, and who, she charged, led her niece ever deeper into puritan and unsocial ways. Mrs. Causton was lively, worldly, giddy-pated, a woman fond of gaieties and amusements which Sophy shunned, and fond of fashions which Sophy slighted—or at least which Sophy declared she didn't care for and wouldn't have, since Wesley's advent upon the scene. The magistrate's wife, among others, remembered resentfully his acrid and almost personal sermons against fine dress when he had first come to Savannah.

The aunt would have liked her pretty niece to join her in a gay social life, which she thought due to her position as the wife of Savannah's chief magistrate. She would have filled her house, the largest in town, with agreeable company, and so avoided these dull times in a new settlement. She would have liked card parties ; Sophy wouldn't touch cards, and would only dress in plain white. She would have liked dancing in her large rooms ; Sophy wouldn't dance. If she sang at all, she would sing hymns. She who could so easily have been the belle, turned her back upon all gaieties. There was no social help to be gotten from her. And Mr. Wesley was, Mrs. Causton reflected sourly, the head and fount of most of this offending. He had made the girl even more "set in her ways." Mrs. Causton was annoyed. What

would he have the girl become? A Quaker, or, even worse, a sort of Protestant nun at large?

The magistrate's wife did not share her husband's desire to have John Wesley come into the family as her niece's husband, though she had to appear willing. His advent would mean the end of all pleasure. She was chagrined, too, at his vacillations. If he meant to marry Sophy, why didn't he come out, ask her husband's consent—which Causton would give for the asking—and proclaim himself her niece's affianced husband at once, thus putting an end to gossip and speculation? The aunt thought Sophy's position equivocal. It might hurt her matrimonial chances with others.

If Wesley announced himself—after duly consulting herself and Mr. Causton—the lady decided that she wouldn't oppose the match by so much as a word, Causton and Oglethorpe being so inexplicably set upon it. At the same time, nobody could make her desire it. Better Wesley, however, than Mellichamp, though Mrs. Causton told herself frankly that if the choice had been hers instead of Sophy's, *she* would have *grabbed* Tommy! One might as well be dead and in heaven at once as married to John Wesley!

Of course, Sophy ought to be married. It would be very much more satisfactory all around. She was a great care, and there was no pleasure at all living in the house with her since she'd turned so religious. Mrs. Causton wished Wesley would make up his mind one way or 'tother once for all. She wished somebody else would come along and act as a foil.

The Caustons had had very little of Sophy's company for some time, until Wesley thought it advisable for her to have supper earlier, and not go to her room immediately after. Since then, the family had more of the young

lady's company. Mrs. Causton, who was sick and tired of the whole affair, which she considered ridiculous, and hurtful to family pride, found in the simple circumstance of having the girl home in the evening, the entering wedge. After the sly manner of a tricky woman who is afraid to cross her husband openly, Mrs. Causton proceeded, insidiously, to feel her way. She found a willing and eager helper close to her hand : Mr. William Williamson, that illegitimate son of Mr. Taylor, a young gentleman who had been shipped to America to be "reclaymed." After all, she reflected, he was better suited to Sophy's age than Mr. Wesley. And he knew his own mind, which Mr. Wesley didn't seem to.

"In the beginning of December," John Wesley wrote, reviewing the train of circumstances, "I advised Miss Sophy to sup earlier, and not immediately before she went to bed. She did so ; and on this little circumstance (for by this she began her intercourse with Mr. Williamson), what an inconceivable train of consequences depend ! Not only all the colour of remaining life, for her ; but probably all my happiness, too, in time and eternity ! "

CHAPTER XIV

“ GOT NO GOOD ”

THE rector of Christ Church Parish in Savannah was a very busy man that winter: sixty minutes of every hour could be accounted for. Oglethorpe had gone to England, but Wesley's labours were in nowise lessened. He had now his little band of students—the small beginning of a great work—with whom he prayed and read and made a strict study of devotional literature. Sometimes they met at the parsonage, sometimes at Miss Bovey's, who, since her lovely young sister's sad death, was more devotional than ever.

His daily exposition of the Scriptures was slowly engendering in him the fine art of speaking in public with ease and clarity upon almost any text. He was beginning to be able to preach intelligently. Whenever he could be, he was at his desk, writing sermons, translating and transcribing German hymns and psalms, putting them in shape for publication, that they might be open to everybody. His correspondence was very large. He wrote interminable files of letters. He drove his parish at a gallop. Nothing and nobody escaped his terrible activity.

Savannah was to be for him a place and a time of fiery trial, the testing of his soul. He was in love with Sophy with all the intensity of his nature, and this natural, human love, which would have come to any other man as the crown of his life, he made a crucifixion to himself and to

the unlucky object of it. A soul in torment, he plunged into a hell of his own devising.

His behaviour was all but incomprehensible. Torn between Sophy and celibacy, he wished both, and dreaded to give up either. If he lost his precious celibacy, he ran the risk of losing his precious soul. If he didn't, he must lose Sophy. The thought of losing Sophy made, for once only in all his life, the threat of hell, the hope of paradise, turn sere and brown around the edges.

When in doubt, he worked, putting on extra steam. He hurled himself into his Collection of Hymns. He walked for endless miles, reading when he was alone, choosing godly topics to talk about when he had companions. All in vain. A girlish shape flitted always beside him. Her eyes haunted his dreams.

Charles Delamotte watched him anxiously. The idea of a Mrs. Wesley invading the parsonage, filling that sanctuary with brats and bawlings, bringing into it all the commonplace details of domestic existence, filled Delamotte with misery. His soul recoiled from the thought of any woman coming that intimately into John Wesley's life—using a wife's prerogative to interfere with her husband—meddling with his work, criticising his friends—taking up his time.

All Delamotte could do was to stay beside Wesley like his shadow, and at every opportunity warn him of danger ahead. Both men were uneasy. Both welcomed labour as the only panacea in sight. Neither feared discomfort ; and their hours, though fairly regular, were inhuman. They would have driven any ordinary woman clean mad.

On a certain Wednesday, the pair, accompanied by a guide, walked through the woods bound for the Cowpen. After a tramp of two or three miles they came to a creek which the guide had forgotten to mention. As they

didn't know where they were, there was nothing for it but to wade through the water, and they took to it singing, and walked on still singing. After another hour's hard plodding, they struck a cypress swamp, which extended for miles. Again there was nothing for it but wading, and after a brief consultation they plunged in, breast high.

It was raining, a cold, steady December downpour. The three men had to wind in and out of an intricate network of huge roots and trees, shoulder deep in icy swamp water. They could make but slow progress, and were very tired when they presently scrambled upon firmer ground and the swamp gave place to open woods. There was no path visible. The guide admitted he was out of all reckoning of the place.

Their wet clothes not so much clinging to as hardening upon them, Wesley and Delamotte tramped onward, until the last glimmer of light died sullenly above the western treetops, and the darkness seemed, not to descend upon, but to emanate from the wilderness. Presently they sat down in the driest spot they could find, under the vast boughs of a liveoak, which partly sheltered them from the rain.

"We had better make a fire and camp here until morning," said Delamotte. "I'm tuckered out."

But the tinder was wet. No fire. Shivering, the three looked at one another. There was no food, either.

"I think we'd better walk on," said Wesley.

"I can't." Delamotte, tired and faint, cast himself upon the wet ground in his wet clothes, the guide dropping down beside him.

"Lard, 'tis a good thing my missus baint here. Worrits a'self wild about wet clo'es, a' does. Wimmin be like that," said the guide, settling himself.

“ We are also grateful that we haven’t wives to worry about us and be worried by us,” said Delamotte, piously. “ Guides and missionaries should never marry.”

Wesley said nothing, but cast himself upon the ground beside them. After a brief prayer, the sleep of complete exhaustion came upon them. The night descended blackly, bringing a sharp frost. Their wet clothes stiffened upon them like iron shrouds, the heavy dew covered them as with white hoarfrost. They slept there in the forest for twelve hours, dreamlessly. If any foe, beast or human, came near, they did not know it. In the bitter cold morning they awoke and walked on, breakfastless, singing a hymn.

For another hour they footed it briskly, then came to the house of Mary Musgrove, the half-breed interpreter, where they found Ingham, had coffee, and rested. At noon Wesley read prayers for a few Indians, interpreted the white man’s Gospel for their befuddlement, and in the afternoon returned to Savannah, picking up his usual work quite as though he had not passed through so gruelling an experience. He seemed to be above the ordinary human weaknesses and fatigues.

It was just such experiences as this that tied Charles Delamotte’s soul fast to John Wesley. He couldn’t but think of the Apostle to the Gentiles, . . . “ in tribulation and distress, . . . in cold and hunger and peril by land and sea, in danger of his life, . . . in good works in season and out of season. . . . ” Had not John Wesley proved himself worthy of the following to which he was called ? And now was he of all men to be caught by a cunning girl, have his great usefulness cut short by domestic cares and joys ? Must Christ lose a profitable servant that Sophy Hopkey might gain a lover ? More yet, was he, Delamotte, who had followed John Wesley into the wilds, to

lose his adored friend that a sly young woman might get her a husband ? Now might God arise and prevent so great a calamity ! For Delamotte could not but know that his friend was greatly in love with the girl. And he grew green with jealousy.

A day or two after Christmas, Hermsdorf came in from Frederica, bringing news of the sad needs of that forsaken fold. Wesley had always loved the soldier, who sang hymns like a man of peace, and was Oglethorpe's right hand in times of danger. But to Charles Delamotte the ruddy face of the German now wore the aspect of an angelic messenger, come to beckon them away for awhile from the danger zone of Savannah. Delamotte would have gone anywhere, even to the ends of the earth, so it might be from Sophy. He would have faced martyrdom for himself and his friend, without a whimper ; he could rather stand seeing Wesley martyred than married.

Ingham came in from the Cowpen and read Hermsdorf's letters, and after a consultation, the three decided that Wesley must pay a pastoral visit to St. Simon's. The season was too stormy to risk going by water, so it was decided that the journey must be made overland. Delamotte cheerfully set about packing for it.

In his capacity of magistrate, Mr. Causton furnished the two clergymen with horses, and secured a better guide for them. He still respected and said he liked Mr. Wesley. His wish was to keep up amiable diplomatic relations with a man who could be very valuable or very dangerous. He reflected that it was Mr. Wesley who had set the best people in the colony almost solidly against Dr. Tailfer by making him notorious for his conduct to the unfortunate Rachel Ure. It was Mr. Wesley, too, who had quietly employed Rachel as maidservant in the parsonage.

Rachel's case was not a matter of ritual but a simple matter of morals. She had been hideously punished for her carnal life, to which she had no wish to return. She needed immediate help for herself and her nameless babe, and nobody else seeming willing to extend it to her, Wesley had stepped into the breach and brought her to the parsonage. People would talk ? Let them. Tailfer was his mortal enemy ? Nevertheless John Wesley would do what he considered right.

Wesley and Delamotte set out on the overland trip, riding through the winter woods, swimming their horses across tidal rivers. They slept as soundly in the rain as during fine weather. Following a meandering trail made the journey much longer than they had thought, and their provisions fell short. They had a small amount of barbecued bear's meat, saved for an emergency, and this they boiled and found wholesome enough, but not agreeable to English palates.

They came presently to the settlement of the Highlanders on the ridge at Darien, twenty miles from Frederica, and were welcomed by the Scotch Presbyterian minister, a sensible man who attended to no business but his own ; but who horrified Wesley by putting up an extempore prayer before a written sermon.

“ I think that the words we speak to God should be set in order at least as carefully as those we speak to our fellow worms ! ” he remarked to Delamotte.

They took boat at Darien, and all in the bitter cold came to Frederica that afternoon, and were not warmed by the welcome of any townsmen except the Hirds, with whom they put up, and Mrs. Weston, their old friend Miss Fossett. The congregation came to services in dribs and drabs, sometimes a few more, and while they listened to Wesley's preaching they remained in-

different to his appeal. He could attract people but he hadn't as yet learned to hold them—he couldn't keep what he caught. It slipped through his fingers. They were hostile to him in *Frederica*.

On the Sunday he spoke reprovingly to some that were going shooting, but they waved fleering hands, sniggered, and went about what they bluntly told him was their business and not his. The resolute parson at once hunted up the magistrates and forced them to direct an order to the constables to be more watchful to prevent this and all other profanations of the Sabbath, at least until Mr. Wesley went back to *Savannah*, where everybody devoutly hoped he would stay. It was even whispered to him that his life might be in danger, some were so incensed against him for interfering with their pleasures.

He was sick, but he carried on his work, his one comfort being his prayers with the sympathetic *Delamotte*. Mr. *McLeod* came over from *Darien* to see him, and he had a long and earnest talk with that good man, to whom he consigned the people of *Frederica* when he should have left them. Very much, doubtless, to their general betterment.

One evening *Beata Hawkins* came to see him, as gay, handsome, provocative, as of old. She came back to evening prayers, bringing her husband with her, and after the services the three prayed together amicably. One wonders if the Recording Angel had an ear-ache that particular night?

So the winter days passed. He had not timed the duration of his stay in *Frederica*, until, visiting aboard a sloop in the river, he heard that young *Tom Mellichamp* was on his way to *Savannah*. *Mellichamp*, out of prison, had been travelling about the country. Tiring of this

aimless wandering, he had decided to return to Savannah, to his mother—and to Sophy.

Wesley heard the news with downright consternation. He must get back to Savannah as quickly as possible. Hurrying to Delamotte, he discussed her peril with his friend, and prayed for her. He was horribly uneasy. His fear for Sophy was largely jealousy on his own account. His last thought that night and his first thought in the morning, was of her. She was, in a most precious sense, his own, and another man was presuming to poach upon his preserves. He was filled with anger and indignation.

“ It is very bad for Miss Sophy to have that fellow come around her,” he told Delamotte, who didn’t care what fellow came around her, so only somebody would come and carry her off. “ She should be protected from him. I fear for her soul’s welfare, Mr. Delamotte.”

Delamotte stifled a hollow groan, but fetched a cold sigh from the depths of an afflicted bosom.

They took a final leave of Frederica that very morning, and everybody was very glad to see them go. John Wesley hadn’t a thought in his head for Beata Hawkins, who had once so obsessed his whole mind. He left her, no better and no worse than he had found her. It had become plain even to him that there is no curing a spoiled apple. She had fooled him, she had injured him, but in the end he won the game. He had the last word : he forgave and forgot her because of a younger and prettier woman.

He was impatient to be in Savannah, but contrary winds and heavy mists made the journey last several days. When he finally reached Savannah, Sophy was with Mary Musgrove, out at the Cowpen. To the Cowpen he rushed that evening, and the sight of Sophy was to him as is the

sun after many dark days. His passion of joy in seeing her couldn't fail to move her. She fell at once under the spell of his stronger nature. Whenever he was with her, his will completely dominated hers.

“ She took boat and came down with me immediately, as it was not her custom to deny me anything,” he wrote in his Journal. “ For indeed from the first day I spoke to her, till that hour, I cannot recollect so much as a single instance of my proposing anything to her, or expressing any desire, which she did not fully comply with.”

Having thus snatched her from the ravening jaws of the innocent Mary Musgrove, whose company he didn't think particularly good for Sophy, he spoke his jealous and anxious mind concerning Tom Mellichamp. Tommy was able to come and go as he pleased now, and might turn dangerous.

“ You must be on your guard against him. You must not see him.”

“ I will try to follow your advice exactly, Mr. Wesley,” was her meek reply.

“ Stay : he writes to you, does he not ? ”

“ When I won't see him, he always writes to me . . . poor Tommy ! ”

“ If he writes to you, you must immediately let me see the letters,” said Wesley. “ Sophy, will you let me read those letters ? It is best for you that I should.”

“ I will let you read poor Tommy's letters, Mr. Wesley.”

“ It is wiser . . . and better that you should not keep anything from me. You know how anxiously I try to guard your best interests. It is not for your soul's good that you should have anything to do with Tom Mellichamp.”

" I won't keep anything from you, Mr. Wesley. I know you are the best friend I have in the world."

" No one has your interest more at heart," said he.

Darkness had settled down upon the Savannah River, along which the boat was moving. He could not see her face, partly concealed in the large hood of the cloak that wrapped her from the cold, but he felt her presence, as always.

" I have a piece of news for you," said Sophy presently.

" What is it ? "

" Our dear Miss Bovey is engaged to be married ! "

" What ! " It came as a disagreeable shock. " What ! "

" To Mr. Burnside ! " finished Sophy. " She told me at once. They are very happy. She says she had not thought to be so happy in this world."

But the news was unwelcome to Wesley. Burnside was the clerk in Mr. Causton's store, a young fellow of good character, with a mind of his own, and no lack of courage ; yet Wesley recoiled.

Miss Bovey was as it were the work of his own hands. Her house was his refuge. She understood just what he wished done, and how it should be done. She was deeply and sweetly religious. He had somehow never given a thought to the possibility of her marrying. Now . . . was everybody itching for matrimony ?

The more he thought about this marriage the less he liked the idea of it. Bright and early the next morning he went to Miss Bovey and told her with all plainness his thoughts of her prospective bridegroom, and why in his opinion she shouldn't marry him.

Her religion and her patience held even under the strain put upon them. She did not at all agree with him, and although she gladly accepted him for a guide, she was not so completely under his dominion as was Sophy :

she was made of sterner stuff. But she was tactful enough to avoid a quarrel. She tried to take his interference, for such she must consider it, as he thought he intended it. "Here," he exclaimed, "is one woman in America in whom to this day I have found no guile."

They parted friends, and when he went back to give her a French lesson, he found Sophy with her, and broke his Friday fast, drinking a cup of coffee with the two girls, both so dear to him. Burnside was waiting at the rectory for him, to discuss the announcing of banns for his marriage.

Wesley talked to Burnside as frankly as he had talked to Miss Bovey. Burnside knew his own mind and his own business so well that Wesley, posting his diary that night had to say he "Got no good"—which meant that he was unable to persuade somebody to his own way of thinking. When he went back to Miss Bovey and expostulated some more with her about what most certainly was her own affair and none of his, he had to add the same dismal "Got no good" to his record.

CHAPTER XV

HONEY OF WILD BEES

HE was in a great strait. He still thought it best for him to live single, but he felt himself more shaken every day.

“ You know,” he would tell Sophy pensively, “ I am wondering whether it wouldn’t really be better for every man to live in the married state ? What do you think, Sophy ? ”

“ How can I think anything about it ? I’m not a man, Mr. Wesley, I’m only a girl.”

“ But you’re a girl any man would be glad to marry.”

Sophy would say nothing to that, merely smile. And then Wesley would go on hinting at his own desire to abandon the state of single blessedness in which he had hitherto existed . . . if he could be sure it was the holy will of God . . . if the right person . . . whom he could most truly love and cherish . . . were to smile upon him. . . .

The one person he could most truly love and cherish all his life smiled upon him. And then he would draw back, terrified at his own rashness. He would snatch up “ *The Imitation of Christ*, ” or some other devotional book as if it had been a shield or a life preserver.

Seeing him at once very brash and very timid, Sophy watched him with feminine curiosity. The way of a man ! He fascinated her. She loved him. But she couldn’t to save her understand him. If Sophy had been older and wilier, he would have been helpless in her

hands, she could have married him a dozen times over. But her youth and truth were against them both. At times, listening to his broad hints, she asked herself :

“ Is it possible that he wants *me* to ask *him* ? ”

That amused her ; and she would use upon her holy lover the artless art of a young girl, playful and innocent. It almost drove him to distraction.

“ Sophy,” he said to her one evening after services, when they paced the moonlit garden paths together, “ do you realize what you have become to me ? Do you even dream how much you mean to me, Sophy ? ”

“ I realize how good you are to me, Mr. Wesley,” she said, sweetly.

It was an exquisite winter night in Georgia, soft and still. The clear sharp moonlight put a glamour upon her tall white figure. He saw in her all that was beautiful and just, all that was pure and young. *Sophy !* He caught his breath with a gasp. She drew him as the moon draws the tide.

“ I think sometimes that you are my very soul, Sophy,” he spoke in a shaking voice, and stopped in his tracks, holding out his trembling hands to her. “ Oh, my love, leave those who cannot appreciate you as you deserve—who do not deserve you—and come to me ! Come to me ! ”

“ I should be doing you,” she said, “ no great service, Mr. Wesley. I should be doing you more harm than good. And that I could not bear.”

“ Let me be the judge of that, Sophy.”

“ You might not judge me so gently . . . afterwards, Mr. Wesley.”

“ Oh, my dear,” it was a cry, “ I love you ! ” And he took her hands and held them in his quivering grasp.

She was used to Mellichamp’s wild wooing ; she was

used to the eyes of other young men looking upon her and saying she was fair. But the intensity of such a passion as John Wesley's disturbed her, even while it thrilled her. She did not withdraw her hands. She did not resist when he gently drew her nearer. And even while her heart fluttered, she wondered what he was going to do and say next ?

" You know," she murmured, " how ignorant I am. I—I doubt my worthiness to be so, cared for, by you."

" Do you care for me, Sophy ? If you do, if you do ! "

She said, faintly, " No one, to whom you have been so kind as you have been to me ; no one, who knows you, as I do, could help caring a great deal for you, Mr. Wesley."

" I think," he said, " that you do love me, Sophy, without knowing how much. I think . . . when you come to me . . . you will find your own love for me in mine for you."

" I—I could wish that to be true," she said.

They had come to the end of the garden path, in the shadow of cedars. And it seemed to him there was a nimbus around her young head. Her eyes looked at him, starry bright and soft, out of shadows. And at that, he kissed her. And it was as if a spirit had taken him by the hair and swung him, breathless, pendulum-like, between the whirling skies and the spinning earth. The winds that are loose around the world roared in his ears, the fire that is the soul of the universe flamed before his eyes.

And then he was standing in his garden path with Sophy, his heart struggling like a wild thing to tear itself out of his breast. In his joy there was also terror.

" My dear, my dear," he said, " you must leave me. Sophy, go."

His intensity again disturbed her. She had of a sudden

the wish to escape. She could inspire passion, but hers was a gentle nature.

"It is time for me to go home," she said gravely. "Dear Mr. Wesley, good night."

"Good night." And he seized her hand, and bent his face to it. She felt his lips upon her palm, and then his tears. Once more she was troubled, a little uneasy. Then she was running down the garden path, was outside in the street, calling to Miss Bovey and John Burnside to wait, she would walk home in their company.

Directly after the five o'clock morning service, Wesley read John Owen to Sophy—Owen, the sternest, heaviest, most puritanic of Puritans. She liked others of his religious friends and guides—a Kempis, Bishop Taylor, Hickes, Fleury, even Efrem Syrus: but John Owen staggered her.

Counting the simplest comforts of life an offence against heaven, Wesley now held morning service before daylight. Sophy had to rise in the dark of winter mornings, and walk through the bleak, empty streets. The sandy sidewalks rang like iron under her feet, the trees stood stark under the wan moon. Though she wrapped herself in a large padded cape and hood, she felt the piercing cold. But one thing she loved about these mornings—never had she seen stars so large and bright, never had the morning star blazed so gloriously. And it was pleasant to enter the room where services were held, meet the friendly faces of John Wesley's little band, and the welcoming earnestness of his smile. Sometimes, fasting, she received the holy communion. Always she breakfasted at the parsonage, sharing their frugal meal, at which, winter or summer, one drank cold water. But at times, in spite of her deep desire to become such a Christian as he was trying to make her, she felt sleepy and confused. She

would watch Wesley with something like fear. There he was, neat, inexorable, terrifyingly alert, so vital and dominant that she felt herself like wax in his hands. There was something inhumanly good about him—and she wondered how a weak girl like herself could ever hope to live up to his demands? Her heart quailed. The wife of even an ordinary clergyman had no bed of roses ; ought a clergyman like this marry at all?

It did not make her more easy in her mind when, after breakfast, he walked up and down the garden paths with her, and turned the talk upon Tom Mellichamp. Since his release from prison, Tommy had been very bitter against everybody—his hand against every man, he said, and every man's hand against him. Sophy was included in this bitterness. She was not, he declared with a savage oath, faithful to the promise she had made him. She was betrothed to him, and she was trying to betray him. She had better beware!

“If I can't reach your heart, a bullet can,” he told her grimly.

And now Wesley, too, tormented her with jealousy. He wished to know every least thing she did and said. She mustn't look at anybody without his consent. He made it more than plain that he wished to be all in all. Sophy's spirit drooped : why did they all demand so much?

“It grieves me,” he said to her one morning after services, “to see you so troubled. Try to understand that your happiness is very dear to me—dearer than my own. If you were to share your life with me, don't you think you might be happier?”

Sophy had had another stormy interview with Mellichamp ; and Mrs. Causton had quarrelled with her bitterly.

"I couldn't be more unhappy, under any circumstances than I am now," she said.

"If you were to share my life with me, I should be very happy, Sophy. Too happy, perhaps, for my soul's welfare. So happy that I fear I should worship the creature instead of the Creator!"

She looked at him with a wan smile. The idea of marriage was just at that moment singularly unattractive to Sophy. Everybody seemed bent on telling her what she must do, what she should do, what they wanted her to do. Nobody seemed to bother about what she herself might wish to do or say!

"I don't think," she said slowly, "that you ought to marry. I don't think a clergyman ought to be encumbered with worldly cares." And while he stood staring at her, she finished: "I am quite sure it is best for me, too, to live single. I am resolved never to marry anybody!"

If he had pressed the point then; or if she had showed but the least sign of encouragement! The fated moment passed.

"I used no argument to induce her to alter her resolution," he set down in his diary. "Upon reflection, I thought this a very narrow escape!"

If she wouldn't marry anybody else, he could bear her not marrying him. He could at once retain his celibacy and her company. She would be as it were Thecla to his Paul.

Indeed, was he not bound in a sort of quasi-betrothal to Sophy? Were not their lives entwined? He had let her know his feelings. She knew he loved her. He had made no formal avowal, she had given no absolute refusal. There was, he thought, an understanding between them. So the matter stood. But he could not think clearly, and

full of confusion and anxiety, he went to his friend, the Moravian pastor Toltschig.

"Now do you think I had better, while I am still in a measure free to do so, break off so dangerous an acquaintance?" he asked.

Toltschig had listened very patiently. He asked gravely:

"If you should break off with the lady now, what do you think would happen?"

"I fear she would lose her soul," said Wesley.

"What do you think would be the consequence if you should not break it off?"

"I fear I should marry her," said the holy lover, and trembled with fear and joy.

The Moravian considered this. After a few minutes, he said deliberately:

"I don't see any reason why you shouldn't."

Wesley left him in a state of amazement bordering on stupefaction. His friend was practically advising him to get married, was accepting it as a mere matter of course. It was the first time that such a point of view had crossed Wesley's mind. There wasn't any reason why he shouldn't marry the girl of his choice, the Moravian had told him. Go ahead and do it.

Wesley hurried to the parsonage, and calling in Ingham and Delamotte, told them what the German had said. The two younger men exclaimed against it. Toltschig was altogether wrong! Toltschig didn't understand the situation! Toltschig's judgment was utterly at fault! Whatever you do, for heaven's sake don't listen to Toltschig! Out upon Toltschig!

Wesley hesitated. His gnawing conscience whispered that Toltschig had, indeed, spoken to him after the manner of the flesh, had he not? Hadn't he, John Wesley,

listened to that voice, which jibed with the desires of his own heart, rather than to God? So he stood there silent, stricken, and looked piteously at his two young confrères, who weren't in love, and who were so good—and so merciless.

“ You have not sufficient proof of her sincerity and religion,” said Ingham.

“ She is truly sincere and truly religious! ” exclaimed Wesley.

“ The appearance of it might be partly owing to an excellent natural temper—for I do admit she is amiable—and partly to her desire to win your affection and marry you,” said Ingham, inexorably.

“ She intends to marry him. If something is not done, she will marry him! ” said Delamotte hollowly, in a groaning voice.

“ How can you reconcile such a desire with what she said to me no later than Thursday last, that she was determined never to marry, and thought it best for me to remain single, too! ” cried Wesley.

“ Oh, very easily indeed,” said Ingham. “ Just make her a direct proposal; pin her down to yes or no; and you'll see how quickly she'll recall her words and change her views.”

“ Yes. Just give her half a chance! ” moaned Delamotte.

“ Suppose Mr. Delamotte and I go and have a talk with Toltschig? ” suggested Ingham.

“ Well . . . perhaps that would be the best thing to do,” Wesley agreed. Later that evening he sent them to see his German friend, while he remained at home to pray over the outcome. Anton Seifart was with Toltschig, and the four threshed the matter over, but could come to no agreement. Toltschig evidently agreed with

St. Paul that it was better to marry than to burn. The Englishmen thought Mr. Wesley's virginity a momentous affair. Seifart thought matrimony a momentous affair also. Any way one looked at it, Mr. Wesley stood both to lose and gain. They parted with mutual blessings. Nobody laughed. . . .

It was midnight when Ingham and Delamotte met Wesley. When they had talked the matter over yet once more, and found no answer, Ingham said suddenly :

“ It has come to me that you ought to go out of town for a few days. You can't judge coolly of these things while you are seeing Miss Sophy every day.”

“ And giving her fresh opportunity daily to try all her female arts ! ” croaked Delamotte. He added gloomily : “ She wants to marry you,” as one who might say, “ The ogress is going to devour you.”

Leave Savannah for awhile. That struck Wesley as the soundest suggestion he had received.

“ Very well : I will leave town for a few days. Shall I say Irene ? ”

“ Yes,” agreed his friends. Irene was a small village some four or five miles from Savannah, and Wesley arranged to set out at break of day. Before he left, however, he wrote a short note, which Miss Bovey was to give into Sophy's own hands.

Feb. 6.—I find, Miss Sophy, I can't take fire into my bosom and not be burnt. I am therefore retiring for awhile to desire the direction of God. Join with me, my friend, in fervent prayer, that He would show me what is best to be done.

But when he came to Irene, he found he did not care to ask counsel of God immediately, “ being a man of so unclean lips.” He set aside Monday, the 7th, for self-

examination, and grilled and gruelled and racked himself ; he picked his mind and heart as a hungry squirrel rifles a meaty nut. Whenever thoughts concerning the issue of things rose, and threatened to divert him from his ghoulish task, he prayed.

“ Lord, Thou knowest ! ” cried John Wesley, on his knees. “ Father, if it be best, let nothing be allowed to hinder : but if it be not best, let nothing be allowed to affect it ! ”

He continued this exercise for several hours, with some degree of cheerfulness. But as the light of the short winter day faded, his spirit sank. Irene was an indescribably raw and desolate place, and the gathering gloom made it all the more depressing. A weight as of the world’s woe descended upon the young man ; his heart was like a stone in his breast. It seemed to him that God hid His face from him. And he felt how bitter it is for a spirit of an unbounded appetite to be left a prey to its own desires.

But as he knelt there in the dark, the peace of the night, the calm of prayer, insensibly fell upon him. He was not deserted ; he stretched forth his hands, and it seemed to him that from on high came help, and his soul received comfort.

He had to go down to Savannah the next morning, where he stayed an hour. There again desire took him by the throat. His heart was with Sophy. He wished to see her, if only for a moment—only let him fill his hungry eyes with the sight of her face !

When the Indian boatmen called to him that it was time to take boat if he meant to go back to Irene that day, it was like a sentence of death.

“ I don’t want to go ! ” whimpered his heart.

“ It is the call of God, ” said his mind sternly. “ Obey ! ”

And as he walked to and fro on the river bank, struggling with himself, a sort of waking trance fell upon him. It seemed to him that suddenly Someone came to him, and said, "*You are still in doubt what is best to be done. First, then, cry to God, that you may be wholly resigned, whatever shall appear to be His will.*"

He rubbed his eyes, and stared. He was as it were in a new world. There lay the yellow river sparkling in the winter sunlight. And there was he, John Wesley, standing on the river bank, with his burden rolled away from his shoulders, like Christian's heavy pack at the foot of the Cross.

"Surely I am dreaming ; surely I am dreaming !" he murmured, for the change was as from death to life.

He stepped into the boat, still in that waking dream of being free from all that had tormented him. He wondered and rejoiced ; yet his heart quaked, for it did not seem to him he was thankful for this blessing come so unexpectedly. He felt that his heart was free, and even light ; but he knew that it was empty. And so he went back to Irene wondering and rejoicing, but very much afraid, lest his want of thankfulness for this blessing, or of care to take advantage of it, might occasion its being taken away from him.

In this pitiable struggle of an obstinate man against his own sane and normal self, he had used every means, divine and earthly ; he had fasted, meditated, prayed ; he read, he wrote down with meticulous care his side of his affair with Mrs. Causton's niece ; he ran from Savannah to Irene, from Irene to Savannah ; he talked to the Indians, on land and in the boat ; he even sought to subdue the rebellious flesh by arduous labour, felling trees, blazing paths in the trackless woods ; and though he had been unable to recover his old power of self-control, he

did indeed succeed in working himself into a state where One could come to him on the river bank and advise him in a voice astonishingly like his own. The real wonder is that seven did not come to him, since he was quite ready to listen to voices, audible and inaudible.

“ I was now more clear in my judgment every day. Besides that I believed her resolve, never to marry, I was convinced it was not expedient for *me*. For two weighty reasons : (1) because it would probably obstruct the design of my coming into America, the going among the Indians ; and (2) because I was not strong enough to bear the complicated temptations of a married state.”

Thus he informed his friends. For shortly after five on Saturday morning, after he had breakfasted on boiled rice and a glass of cold water, and done his daily stint of posting his affair with Sophy up to the minute, he took boat and returned to Savannah, feeling that he had accomplished the purpose of his stay at Irene. After dinner he informed his friends, Burnside, Delamotte, Ingham, and the Germans, of his decision to stay single.

He waited until Monday morning to explain things to Sophy. After service, they walked in his garden ; he paused, and finally spoke :

“ I am resolved, Miss Sophy . . . if I marry at all . . . not to do it until I have been among the Indians.”

Sophy smiled, and said sweetly that it was wonderful to know one’s mind and have one’s future mapped out ahead of one like that. For herself, she couldn’t be sure from day to day what would happen to her. The girl knew that Wesley’s chance of going among the Indians was, to say the least, remote. She knew that Oglethorpe was opposed to his leaving Savannah, which, in the Governor’s opinion, needed missionaries more than the Indians did. In the face of Mr. Wesley’s several proposals to

herself, should she take this as a hint that if she promised herself to him, if she listened to his pleadings, their marriage must still be farther off than his going to the savages? What was she to think? She stood in too much awe of him to ask him outright questions. And as he added nothing more to that flat statement, she had to let it go at that. But the more she thought about it, the more puzzled she grew.

When she went back to the parsonage that afternoon, Wesley, as if to daze her even more, treated her, Tom Mellichamp's mother, and the joyful Delamotte to "Owen, tea, and conversation."

The next morning it was Sophy's turn to express her own intentions to Mr. Wesley, in payment for the pleasant surprise he had given her the day before.

"People wonder," said she, tying her bonnet strings under her white chin, and distracting the young man's eyes, "what I can do so long at your house."

"What difference does it make to you what people wonder? You are studying and learning here, aren't you?"

"Oh, yes," said Sophy, still busy with her bonnet, "but I am resolved not to breakfast with you any more—and I won't come to you any more alone."

He was resolved not to marry . . . if he married at all . . . until he had been among the Indians? Oh, very well, then—she wouldn't breakfast with him any more, and have people talking about her on his account.

He detained her for a little while, walking up and down his garden. Gentle as she was, for once he found her obstinate, and so "got no good." It startled him, and made him uneasy. Somebody had been saying something to Sophy to make her behave thus!

And now it began to appear as though Sophy was with-

drawing herself from his company, instead of his having to withdraw from hers. A few mornings later she said to him quietly :

“ I don’t think it signifies for me to learn French any longer.”

“ You mean you are not coming here to me any more in the mornings ? ” he cried out, and turned pale, and looked at her with something of consternation. “ Why, shan’t I see you any more, then ? ”

“ My aunt and uncle, as well as I, will be glad of your coming to our house as often as you like, Mr. Wesley.”

“ But you know I don’t like a crowd, and there is always a crowd there ! ” he objected. Why, that meant he should never have a chance to see Sophy alone !

She said ever so gently : “ But we needn’t be in it, need we ? ”

Nevertheless, for all his pleading, she came no more alone in the morning to spend happy hours with him. She still meant to follow the religious life, for she came faithfully to early services, but there was a break in the old intimacy ; and although he had prayed for this, now that his prayer was answered he resented it with all his heart. After evening prayer, she remained, with the little band of which she was a member (some laughed and called them Methodists, in derision) for devout reading, conversation, prayer, and singing of hymns.

At his insistence, she still had a French lesson in her own home. Longing in her turn for the old intimacy that meant so much to them both, she consented to come back to the parsonage in the afternoon, and they walked and talked and prayed and sang together. She stayed for tea with him. And still he said nothing definite.

He called upon her in turn, and they walked together in the Causton garden, which was larger than his but not

so beautiful. She did not seem to be affected by anything he said, for Sophy rather expected him to talk on the subject which he so carefully avoided.

She had had one of her blinding headaches all day, and suddenly she felt as if hammers beat upon her brain. His careful words angered her. He had never before seen her in such a temper, so fretful, so sharp. Once she even contradicted him, to his vast astonishment. Sophy disputatious ! Was the sky about to fall ?

But presently, passing her hand over her forehead, she sighed deeply, and seemed to awake as out of a sleep.

“ I have been troubled . . . ill all day,” she said faintly. “ I have been hardly in my senses. Have I behaved very badly, Mr. Wesley ? Forgive me. You must blame my behaviour on my headache—not on me.”

She was still very pale, and there were dark circles under her eyes. He knew she still suffered ; and the effect of this, and her sweet humility, wrung his heart. He had blamed her for being fretful . . . and all along she had been suffering, without complaining. Dear Sophy ! Ah, kind heaven, do not ask him to give Sophy up !

He managed to see her constantly. He visited the Caustons, and was visited by them. He took tea with them. He met Sophy at Miss Bovey’s. It was noticeable, that wherever Miss Hopkey happened to visit, Mr. Wesley was sure to be also. People said he followed her around like the tail of her gown. These constant meetings, innocent as they were, were already the occasion of gossip and even slander.

He had preached so vehemently against the form of white slavery practiced by many colonists to secure labourers for their plantations, he had thundered with such hot indignation against the negro slavery for which

they were clamouring, he had preached so scathingly against drinking, and gambling, and dancing, and Sabbath breaking, and extravagance in dress, his voice was raised so insistently against everything he thought evil, that already half the colony were his enemies, and glad to grab at any word against him. Was he trying to make Georgia a penal settlement to which people were condemned to hard labour for life, and from which all pleasures and comforts were banished as evils ? Garbled reports of his activities were circulated, and grew as they were repeated. Malicious lies were being written and spread abroad against the four members of the Holy Club, lies so injurious that it had become necessary to know what the Trustees had heard and believed. And this was the more necessary, since the missionaries had been employed by the State, and were partly maintained by government grants and public subscriptions. They felt themselves to be in a land of spies, whose malice they must outwit. Charles was already in England, and now another of them must go home and make an exact report of the whole state of affairs in Georgia. It was presently agreed that Ingham must be the one to go.

When Wesley mentioned to Sophy that either he or Ingham must return to England, she fixed her eyes earnestly upon him, changed colour, and broke out, in a startled voice : " What ! are you going to England ? Then I have no tie to America left ! "

" Indeed, I think I must go, too," said Mrs. Causton. " Phiky, will you go with me ? "

" Yes ! With all my heart ! " cried the girl, with passion.

" But last night you said you wouldn't ! " said her aunt.

" True. But now all the world is alike to me," said Sophy.

Wesley couldn't but be elated. His heart glowed. That evening walking home with her from the parsonage, he asked her :

" Just what did you mean this afternoon by saying that if I went to England, you had no tie to America left ? "

She said with tears : " You are the best friend I ever had in this world. You showed yourself a friend indeed, at a time when no one else would have offered me more than common pity."

" You would hardly confess this, if the Trustees should believe all the ill they hear against me, and take away all I have here," said Wesley.

" Indeed I would," cried Sophy, with flashing eyes. " You and your friends can never want while I have anything."

Her voice rang with sincerity, her face was bright with generous emotion. It seemed to John Wesley that she combined the graces of heaven and the charms of earth. He left her that night more in love than ever.

When he next called at the Causton house, only Sophy was at home. It was Georgia weather—clear, sunlight, sparkling air, a blue day that breathed the promise of Spring. Sophy in her white dress seemed to his dazzled eyes the very spirit of it.

He thought he had never seen her so lovely. Her few but vital words ; her woman-eyes, her slightest gesture, were so full of softness and sweetness, that his heart melted in his breast. He thought he was being consumed with love for this girl. An emotion so exquisite that even he could not condemn it, flooded all his being. He wished passionately to touch her, to feel with his hands that rosy flesh. But at thought of touching her he trembled, and a sort of shuddering ecstasy all but deprived him of his senses.

" What might have been the consequence had I then but touched her hand, and how I avoided it, I know not. Surely God is over all ! " he said.

She came to church on Sunday, and after all the company was gone, she remained with him. Delamotte could not bear it. Without a word, he rose and left the two alone together, not finding himself strong enough to bear the light of John Wesley's eyes fixed upon the young girl's beauty. She was all in white, her dark cape and bonnet laid aside, and the Spring sunlight caressed the bright gold in her hair. Her holy lover thought her brow and breast whiter than the may. Spring was coming on flying feet to Georgia, and Spring looked at him with Sophy's eyes.

All his resolutions failed. He loved her. His blood was no more the cold blood of an ascetic priest. He had been talking seriously on godly topics, from force of habit. But now he fell silent, and his eyes, young and ardent, looked upon her caressingly, his lips curved into a young man's smile.

His hand stole out and took hers, and held it, palm to palm. She dropped her eyes, and her cheek showed a rosy tinge ; but she did not withdraw her hand. She was vaguely troubled by his nearness, and as usual her slight fear of him was mingled with curiosity as to what he would do next. No other man had ever looked at her with eyes like John Wesley's at that moment. The man was as chaste and as untouched as the girl, but more ardent ; as innocent, in all the ways of the world, but more passionate. He held her hand, and perceived that she was not displeased. And then he kissed her, once, on the lips.

He felt so great an ecstasy of the heart, that he could not utter a word beyond the murmur that was a sigh of

Sophy. His whole body trembled. He was intoxicated, as with some sweet and heady wine made from honey of wild bees.

She had received his kiss like a child. She sat quite still, her hand in his. She did not raise her eyes, and he, not seeing what was in them, thought even in such a moment that she had been perfectly sincere in her passionate assertion that she would never marry while she lived.

It gave him a curious satisfaction ; it offered a solution. The wild tumult of his emotion subsided into something not unlike peace. And so he did not press her to lay aside that unnatural determination, and do what she should have done : marry him. The thought that she would never marry was not painful to him. He could still love her . . . still have such exquisite moments as this hour had brought him. . . . He thought he could trick Fate, eat his cake and have it too. Was God arranging it thus ?

“ I must go,” said Sophy, rousing herself. Gently she withdrew her hand. And suddenly he was back upon the prosaic earth, in the bare room, with sordid cares pressing upon him. He was not King of Thule ; he was only John Wesley, pastor of a frontier parish which didn’t like him.

What he had experienced, what had seemed so right and just and true to the Self that came when Sophy held his hand, frightened him once she had left him. And although he saw her several times the following week . . . he dared not touch her. Yet his eyes touched her hair, her throat, her young bosom, her white dress, her slim fingers, wistfully, with a longing that wrenched Delamotte’s heart. On a certain evening, when Delamotte had been with him at the Caustons’, and Wesley had refrained from even shaking hands with Sophy, on their

return to the parsonage Delamotte gave way to tears. Wesley had never seen his young disciple show so much uneasiness before. He exclaimed, weeping :

“ We must part. I know we must part. I can’t, I won’t live in this house when you are married to Miss Sophy ! ”

“ I am not engaged to Miss Sophy. I have no intention of marrying her.”

“ If you mean what you say, then you don’t know your own heart,” said Delamotte. “ But I see very clearly that it will soon come to your marrying her. I told you from the beginning that her aim was to marry you ! And she will do so . . . I know she will do so ! ”

“ You are talking foolishly ! ”

“ I was never more in earnest in my life. I tell you, all this will end in your marrying this girl, unless——” He stopped, and looked at his friend doubtfully.

“ Unless—— ? ”

“ Well, then, unless you break off all intercourse with her at once,” said Delamotte sullenly.

“ That is a point of great importance, and can’t be determined suddenly,” parried Wesley.

“ You ought to determine what you are going to do, as soon as possible,” insisted Delamotte, with tears. “ You are losing ground daily. You don’t seem to see how things are going. I do.”

“ Maybe what you say is true,” confessed Wesley. “ I admit I find my resolution more and more shaken.” And he sighed and smiled.

“ Will you take time to-morrow to determine this matter finally ? ” asked Delamotte. “ I beg, I implore you—pause before you find yourself entangled for life ! ”

“ Perhaps I had better do so,” hesitated Wesley. “ I—well, yes : I will take time to-morrow.”

The first thing he did after morning prayer was to re-read certain resolutions, made some months before. Among them he reaffirmed :

“Not to touch ever her clothes by choice : think not of her.”

That resolution had been written before Christmas, and it was now March. He wished to live up to it, in the name of God. Nevertheless he was but a mortal man, in love with a very human girl. In spite of all resolutions, and promises to heaven, and himself, and Delamotte, he remained mortal.

At intervals he had met and talked with Mrs. Causton's friend, Mr. William Williamson. They did not, apparently, dislike each other, but both were watchful, and neither talked of Sophy. There was talk and to spare about her between Wesley and Delamotte, though. No decision had been reached. Delamotte was for an unequivocal break with Miss Hopkey, Wesley was not—he said he couldn't do it. They both agreed that Ingham's objection to her was the strongest, the doubt whether she was really pious, as she pretended.

But even this they couldn't agree upon : Wesley said yes, Delamotte said no.

“Let us appeal to the Searcher of Hearts,” the clergyman suggested, and Delamotte agreeing, three lots were made.

One was “*Marry.*” A second read “*Think of it no more this year.*”

Delamotte was to draw. The two solemn-faced young men then knelt down, and besought the Almighty to “give a perfect lot.” Then, closing his eyes, and with his lips still moving in prayer, Delamotte drew the third slip of paper, on which were these words : “*Think of it no more.*”

He read the words in a shaking whisper. And he looked at his friend with intense expectancy.

“Thy will be done!” exclaimed the priest, raising his eyes. He was astonished that he could say this without groaning.

“Let us cast lots once again, to know whether you should converse with her any more,” besought Delamotte, eagerly. The Lord having so signally shown Himself in his favour, Delamotte thought he could trust Him on a second throw. The direction Wesley received from God on that second throw was :

“*Only in presence of Mr. Delamotte.*”

Wesley lifted a very pale face.

“O Lord God . . . behold . . . I give Thee . . . the desire of my eyes . . . the joy of my heart . . . the one thing on earth I longed for!” he said. Tears trickled through his clasped fingers.

CHAPTER XVI

THE TESTING OF JOHN WESLEY

YOUNG Tom Mellichamp was back in Savannah ; and in what might be called a chastened spirit he came to see John Wesley and prayed with him. He still saw Sophy, but he no longer terrified her with wild threats. What he had to say now he said through letters, not altogether trusting himself. She was as ever very gentle, and "poor Tommy's" penitent mood, his milder bearing, his young, pleading face and beseeching eyes were more dangerous to her peace of mind than ever his violence had been ; for then she had had to blame and fear him ; now she reproached herself for not loving him.

The young man understood that Mr. Causton was against him, and that he was now the object of Mrs. Causton's shrewish dislike ; she had gone so far as to forbid her niece to see him, or to receive letters from him. He evaded this by sending his letters through a friend, and Sophy had not the heart to refuse to receive them. Tommy complained of his sad state of mind to John Wesley, whom he knew to be in high favour with the Caustons, and with Sophy herself. Wesley hadn't much consolation to offer.

Mellichamp did not guess that his pastor was in almost as sad a state of incertitude as himself. Wesley was resorting to his old trick of casting lots to determine the mind of the Almighty and the directions of Providence in regard to his own immediate affairs ; and although the

answers were not such as he wished to receive, he trusted that his "much importunity" might have its reward.

Everybody in Savannah knew now that the parson was in love with the chief magistrate's pretty niece. Everybody was watching and whispering. As he had taken everybody into his confidence about Beata Hawkins, so now he took all his friends and acquaintances into his confidence about Sophy, and begged advice, and listened to objections. Sophy's love affair was everybody's business, due to her holy lover's skinned conscience.

She found herself in a lamentable position, beset on every side, by turns bewildered, frightened, and be-devilled. Mellichamp's friends, including his mother, waylaid her. Passionate letters from Tommy, begging her to be patient with him, to be faithful to him, to elope with him, were slyly conveyed to her. Her aunt quarrelled with her for a mischief-making minx that kept her family in constant trouble ; she screamed at the girl that Mr. Wesley was making a fool of her, and filling her head with silly notions.

When her aunt took breath, her uncle came at her, bidding her remember what Oglethorpe wished, and hinting that his own favour with the Governor might be seriously damaged if she proved disobedient. And Mr. William Williamson had now begun to pay her serious attentions. She knew he wished to marry her. Above all, there was John Wesley.

While John Wesley's doubts of her, and of his friendship with her, were being aired to all his friends ; while he was asking heaven and earth whether it was to his best good to marry her ; while he was explaining to heaven and earth what he wished to do but didn't wish to do ; something of it all reached Sophy's ears. Savannah was a small community, gossiping and backbiting like all small

communities, and most of the gossip centred now around Sophy and the parson. Mr. Causton heard it, and frowned ; then Mrs. Causton heard it, and after that there was no peace for Sophy.

Meeting Mr. Wesley one afternoon, Mr. Causton civilly invited him to ride out to his plantation, some four miles outside Savannah. It was a most beautiful place, a small hill in the foreground, magnificent trees everywhere, and the river and long miles of marsh before it. Causton was planning to make this his principal residence, and already he was beginning to make it a beautiful and valuable estate.

“A home for Sophy—and I hope her children—after her aunt and I are gone. She’s all we’ve got, Mr. Wesley,” he mentioned casually.

Wesley said nothing, but fell to the hard work of cutting down trees, glad of the physical labour. He had been for some days in a melancholy mood, and this work in the crisp air, the salty breath of the marshes and the sea, the odour of yellow jessamine climbing into the tree-tops, soothed him inexpressibly. The spell was still upon him, and upon Causton as well, when they rode back into town, and the magistrate begged him to come in and drink a dish of tea with the family.

Soon after he came in, Sophy left the room and he could see her tall slight figure walking up and down between the house door and the garden path.

It was an evening in early Spring. The last glories of a splendid sunset were fading into skies turning smoky pearl, and the smell of woodsmoke, of hearthfires, of tender growths creeping upward, of timid leaves, the breath of the friendly earth at twilight, filled all outdoors. And there in the glimmering evening walked a tall, shapely figure in glimmering white.

He saw that she wished to speak with him, but sat still, remembering the lot which bade him speak to her only in Delamotte's presence. He struggled ; but it was as if the young Spring herself had called him to the twilight garden, under the first trembling stars. A vagrant odour of jessamine stole to his nostrils, caressing, coaxing . . . as if Sophy had touched him. His strength failed. He rushed outside to her.

She caught both his hands and held them against her breast, and with lovely looks and the most appealing manner, she whispered in her soft voice :

“ You never denied me anything that I desired yet, and you shall not deny me what I desire now.”

“ Sophy, I can't deny you : what is it ? ”

“ Don't say anything to her that offered me that letter the other day. My refusing it has given her pain enough already.”

She referred to a note from Tom Mellichamp, which the young man's mother had offered her, when they met at the parsonage, and which Sophy had refused to take.

Wesley, whom the incident had disturbed, and who had, with his usual indiscretion, mentioned it before others, said instantly :

“ I will not say anything. If you had told me of it before, I would not have told your uncle, as Mr. Williamson did.”

She was silent for a moment, then, in a changed voice, she murmured :

“ Mr. Williamson mentioned it to my uncle ? Ah, well, I find what you have often said is true. There is no trusting any but a Christian.” And after a moment, she added : “ For my part, I am resolved never to trust any one again who is not one.”

The young man's throat throbbed ; it seemed to him

that she was drawing all his being into hers, through her hands upon him. He could only look at her, with eyes of longing and desire. He trembled and wild words tore at the barrier of his lips.

“ Sophy ! Oh, Sophy. . . . I—I——”

In another moment, he would have poured it forth. And then Causton appeared at the door to call them in. Wesley had but time to whisper, imploringly :

“ Come in the morning to breakfast with me, Sophy, won’t you ? ”

She said she would, breaking her promise never to break breakfast with him again, as he had broken his resolution never to speak to her except in Delamotte’s presence. And there she was, like the morning’s self, sitting opposite him and Delamotte the next day, after five o’clock prayers.

Even with Delamotte present—and meaning to remain, too, though Wesley wished with all his heart he would go, and Delamotte knew and ignored the wish—he could not refrain from personalities. He knew that Mellichamp wrote to her at every opportunity, begging her to see him, to let him hear from her, avowing his passion for her, beseeching her to marry him, not to listen to her uncle or aunt or any one else. Of late the letters had become more and more importunate as the writer realized that Mr. Causton would never consent to his niece’s marriage with him, and that Mrs. Causton, as she said openly, “ looked higher for Sophy than that scamp Tom Mellichamp.”

Wesley knew Sophy pitied the young man. He was afraid of that pity, which was a sort of passion in her. She could blame no one, and any appeal to her heart forced from her, almost as by instinct, an instant reply. Sophy, in spite of her fear of Mellichamp, was unable to condemn him now. He was so wild, so headstrong,

so in need of help and tenderness, that his very need drew her to him. Poor Tommy ! Poor bad passionate Tommy, that every one but Sophy, whom he most persecuted, condemned and would punish !

“ Miss Sophy,” said Wesley abruptly, “ what do you now think of Mr. Mellichamp ? ”

She said directly : “ I thank God I have entirely conquered that inclination.” And she added : “ I read his letters, Mr. Wesley, and I am sorry for him, but I see very plainly now that I couldn’t be of any help to him.”

Delamotte changed the conversation to a godlier topic in which the three of them took part, though it was evident that their hearts were not in it. Wesley, in a momentary pause, broke in again :

“ I hear Mr. Williamson pays his addresses to you. Is it true ? ”

Delamotte’s hand shook. The two young men, sitting stone still, fastened devouring eyes upon the girl.

“ If it were not, I would have told you so,” she answered.

“ How do you like him ? ” His breath came short at that.

“ I don’t know. There is a great deal in being in the house with one, and he is constantly at our house. But I have no inclination for him.” She spoke without the slightest trace of embarrassment. Her manner suggested that she was trying to answer Wesley’s questions with the plainest truth, so far as she knew it.

“ Miss Sophy, if you ever deceive me, I shall never believe any one again ! ” said Wesley, with sudden passion.

She did not lower her eyes, but continued to meet his almost fierce glance with perfect frankness.

“ You will never have that reason for distrusting any one : I shall never deceive you,” said she.

She went away presently. At the door, as if moved by a sudden thought, she turned back and spoke abruptly :

“ Mr. Wesley, be assured of one thing : I will never take any important step without first consulting you.” She walked away quickly, without waiting his reply.

“ If you continue to converse with her, every day will make it worse for you,” said Delamotte, with a face of gloom. “ You won’t have resolution enough to break it off—and you don’t need to think that she will.”

“ I am struggling in the net,” said Wesley, sighing.

“ And fearing to be delivered,” finished Delamotte, bitterly, and left him.

Yes. He feared to be delivered ! And he thought : what if Toltschig should be altogether right, and others wrong ? What if Heaven means me to have her ? When he thought of possessing Sophy, his senses all but fled in the uprush of ecstasy that swept through him. To hold Sophy, to feel the sweet coolness of her hands, the fire of her lips. Once only in all John Wesley’s life was he to know such passion, made up of delight and desire, and a sort of tumultuous tenderness, and imagination ; a passion in which body and soul took equal part. Ah ! What if Toltschig were right ?

That evening after prayers Miss Bovey came, accompanied by Sophy, who was in the utmost consternation. He had never before seen Sophy in such a state—utterly unnerved, almost haggard. At sight of him she gave a cry and ran to him, and with wet eyes and clasped hands begged him to go at once and try to pacify her aunt, from whose violent rage she had just made her escape.

Miss Bovey, with her arms around the frightened girl, sought in vain to soothe her.

“ I’ve never seen her like this before,” she whispered to Wesley. And then, with a burst of indignation, she

exclaimed : " She is too much driven and harried, poor girl ! "

" What do you wish me to do ? " Wesley wanted to know, helplessly.

" Well . . . if you don't know what to do on your own say, you can at least do what she asks," said Miss Bovey. " Go and see if you can pacify that raging devil, Mrs. Causton."

" Very well, I'll go at once," he agreed.

" Some day she'll be driven clean desperate among all of you. All at her, and none helping her—She'll be driven to do something she'll regret the balance of her life. That's what I'm afraid of for her," cried Miss Bovey. But Wesley, snatching up his hat and cloak, set out on a run for the Causton house.

He found Mrs. Causton stamping up and down, in great disorder, her cap awry, an open letter in her hand.

" Read it ! " she bawled. " Read it ! I have just intercepted it, Mr. Wesley ! Read that, and tell me what you think of my niece ! "

It was merely another incoherent letter from Mellichamp to Sophy, coaxing, praying, half threatening, half promising. He thanked her on his knees for the kindness she had showed him when he last was allowed to see her. Now let him see her but once more ! If she will only let him talk to her again, he knows he can make everything right. . . .

" She hears from him, she sees him, she has the effrontery to write to him, without her uncle's knowledge or my consent ! " screamed the fury, stamping her feet. " But she knows what I'll do to her, she knows what I think of such carryings on ! I put a flea in her ear this night, I warrant ye ! — This to me, after all I've done for her ! After all the coaxing and praying and scoldings

she'd had ! I've talked to that girl until I've been blue in the face—and this is how she does me ! ”

Wesley, who saw through Mellichamp's letter in a trice, and knew just how it and others like it had affected Sophy, said soothingly, “ I am sure things are not so bad as you imagine. Wait—I'll go see Mellichamp himself, if you like.”

Mrs. Causton eagerly agreeing, he left, and found Mellichamp sitting moodily at home with his mother. A few minutes' conversation served to show the young girl's innocence. She had no wish to deceive Tom, or any one else, as Mellichamp himself was the first to admit. She had nothing but pity.

Shaking hands with the unhappy young man Wesley hurried back to the Causton house, to which Sophy had in the meantime returned.

The girl was sitting limply, her head bowed to the flood of her aunt's invectives ; that lady meantime striding up and down, waving Mellichamp's intercepted love-letter.

“ If your uncle and me did what we ought to do he'd give you a whipping for the hussy you are ! Nothing but trouble with you ! I am heart-scalded. Get out of my house ! ” she was yelling, as Wesley entered the room. “ Get out of my house ! I won't be plagued to death with you any longer ! I won't ! I won't ! Shut up, you beast ! Don't dare say a word to me ! All I want you to do is to get out of my house ! ”

For some minutes more she continued to pour out a torrent of abuse and reproaches, mingled with threats. Then, as if becoming aware of Wesley's presence, she turned to him :

“ Mr. Wesley, I wish *you* would take her. Take her away with ye this minute, Mr. Wesley ! Take her out of my house ! ”

Sophy raised her desperate eyes. Over her deathly face a cruel shamed red crawled painfully. She said not a word, but looked from one to the other.

“ Miss Sophy is welcome to my house, or anything I have,” said Mr. Wesley, lamely.

Sophy no longer hung her head, but sat erect, watching him through streaming tears. She made no attempt to conceal her grief. She was driven to such a pitch of misery as to be careless of who saw her shame and anguish. Those uplifted, weeping eyes were full of an almost unbearable appeal. Oh, why didn’t he do something, say something, that might save her? *If you love me, said her eyes, speak, save me now or never! You must see how I am beset, how driven, how tormented; you must see, now, what they do to me; you must see that I am come to the end, that I can bear no more!*

He said nothing at all. Had he allowed his heart to speak for him, he would have snatched the forlorn young creature in his arms, and rushed forth with her out of that wretched house, away from that virago. He said nothing at all.

Presently, Mrs. Causton’s rage having burnt itself down to smouldering embers, he turned and went, with speciously polite good nights. He went with a heavy heart. For he had left Sophy to her fate.

After a troubled night, he rushed to the Causton house early in the morning. Mrs. Causton herself hurried to meet him. She was calm and collected, neatly dressed, her face unruffled, her mouth, that had been shrieking last night, now wreathed in smiles. She took the hand Wesley held out. Hardly had he time to give the usual greetings, when she said hastily :

“ Mr. Wesley, Mr. Causton and I are exceedingly obliged to you for all the pains you have taken with Sophy.”

"Whatever pains I have taken with Miss Sophy have been a great pleasure to me, madam," said Mr. Wesley, bowing.

"—And so is Sophy, too," went on Mrs. Causton, inexorably. "Her uncle and I and Mr. Williamson talked with her last night, after you went home. We had to make her see reason. We talked with her until clean daylight came upon us, to make her see what was best for her."

Something clutched at John Wesley's heart. He had left Sophy last night to her fate ; and in the dark hours between night and morning her fate had come upon her. As if from a distance, a piercing voice was saying :

"Sophy desires you would publish the banns of marriage between her and Mr. Williamson on Sunday."

He could make no answer. He seemed to have no tongue. He stood and stared at the woman, owlishly ; slowly all the red drained from his face.

"Sir," said she, "you don't seem to be well pleased." And she asked, with a shrewish twist of the lips :

"Have you any objection to it ?"

Mrs. Causton was utterly out of patience with Mr. Wesley. If he wanted her niece, she asked, why didn't he have guts enough to come out and say so ? Why shillyshally ? Why allow the girl to become talked about on his account ? Why endanger her chances of marrying some other ?

He heard himself saying, in a thick voice : "Madam, I . . . don't seem to be awake. Surely I am in a dream !"

She ignored this. Let his dream turn into a nightmare, and serve him right ! She said, with a smile which wounded him :

"They agreed on it last night, after you had gone.

And afterwards Mr. Williamson asked Mr. Causton's consent, and my consent, and we gave it."

He said nothing. But something in that stricken face of his moved her, in spite of herself. She had had to face that selfsame look in Sophy's eyes when the wornout girl had been driven into saying Yes to a man she did not love. Even at that, Sophy had made certain stipulations to which they had been forced to agree, lest she turn, at bay. Mrs. Causton was worrying about those stipulations now, as she looked at the clergyman. She said hurriedly as if against her will :

" Mr. Wesley, if you have any objections, pray speak. She is at the Lot. Go to her there. She will be glad to hear anything Mr. John Wesley has to say."

After a moment's reflection, he said, in a grave voice :

" No, madam. If Miss Sophy is engaged, I have nothing to say. It will not signify for me to see her any more."

It had begun to rain when he was leaving the parsonage, and now the downpour grew worse. Pale, unheeding, he turned to go. The lady caught him by the arm.

" Stay at least until the worst of the rain is over," she begged. And she began to talk to him, the burden of it being, Go and talk with Sophy yourself.

He hardly heard her. All in a daze, he broke from her and walked away. After awhile, when he reached home, he rushed into the wet garden and sat there for an hour, lost in thought. Gradually his mind cleared. He was able to repeat, without screaming : " Sophy is engaged to William Williamson." And then he went over Mrs. Causton's behaviour that morning, and remembered her repeated requests that he should go and talk to Sophy herself.

Was it an artifice to quicken him into action ? He

knew, in his heart, that it was no artifice of Sophy's ! She loved him, John Wesley, and because she loved John Wesley, she must know that William Williamson had no power to make her happy. He turned that thought over and over ; but yet, with the obstinate man's cruel struggle with himself, he could not make up his mind to save her by marrying her himself.

That casuistry which had made him a marked man at Oxford long ago, came speciously to his aid now. He tried to reason : " Either she is engaged, or she is not. If she is, I would not have her if I might. If she is not, there is nothing in this which ought to make me alter my resolutions."

But not even the cleverest casuistry could save him from misery. Himself said to him :

" Sophy, who loves me, is being forced to marry Williamson. And I who love Sophy . . . I . . . oh, God . . . am going to stand aside and let her be lost, body and soul, to save . . . my . . . chastity."

CHAPTER XVII

FATE

“MR. DELAMOTTE,” said John Wesley, “I don’t know just what to do—I am not myself. Will you go to the Lot and ask her if my company would be agreeable? And in the meantime, my friend, I will remain here and seek the Oracle of God.”

When the young man had gone on his errand, Wesley had recourse to his usual procedure in time of perplexity: sortilege. He cast lots, and received two bewildering replies:

“*Blessed be thou of the Lord, my daughter: for thou hast shewed more kindness at the latter end than at the beginning,*” said the first.

What did it mean? Was it referring to Sophy? The second lot was quite as non-committal:

“*If I be an offender, or have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die. But if there be none of these things whereof they accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them.*”

When Delamotte came back with a favourable answer, Wesley went to the Lot, and found Williamson with Sophy.

“Why would you put yourself to the trouble of sending Mr. Delamotte?” she asked, sweetly. “What need of such ceremony is there between you and me? You know your company is always welcome to me.”

She thought that her aunt had told him how the matter

stood between herself and Williamson—that her engagement was but tentative, his decision making it or breaking it. She thought he knew that she must have been driven to extremities, to have agreed even to so much as that.

He did not know what to reply. And Williamson, who didn't want him to say what he himself didn't want to hear, broke the silence.

“I suppose you know what was agreed on last night between Sophy and me ?”

“I have heard something of it. But I can't, I won't believe it until I hear it from her own lips,” said Wesley, coldly.

“I have given Mr. Williamson my consent, unless you have anything to object,” said the girl gallantly. And her thought was, Now he knows the truth, now he will object, and they will let me be, I shall have peace.

And his thought was, What if she means, “I have given him my consent—unless you will marry me ?” And then he checked that true thought with the specious plea : “She is so sincere that if she meant that she would say so !” As if, in so many words, she hadn't !

And he heard himself saying in a hard voice :

“If you have given your consent, the time is past. I have nothing to object.”

The words fell upon her ear like a blow, the light went out of her eyes. Williamson, looking sharply from one to the other, breathed a quick sigh of relief. He had won ! He thought rapidly, and then :

“If you really have anything you wish to say, Mr. Wesley, say it now, I beg of you.” And he bowed, and left them.

They stood looking at one another. Wesley's thoughts were in so great a turmoil, that he could not speak. Pity for her—a grief that tore his heart ; pity for himself ;

jealousy ; desire ; all these emotions crowded upon him. Sweat came upon his forehead, and his eyes, full of despair, were as those of a dying man who implores absolution.

Sophy, too, remained wordless. Surely, now—at the last minute—knowing what he knew, he would speak out, repeat what he had so often protested, and save her ! Didn't he know that the thing had come about in a moment when the Caustons were out of temper with her, because of Mellichamp ? That that was why they were all trying to rush her into this hasty marriage ! And that it couldn't go on, if he said now that it mustn't ?

So they looked at each other. In the man's breast, under all the turmoil and torment, was " a faint, struggling desire to do and suffer the will of God "—and a doubt whether, if he spoke out now, his proposal would be listened to and accepted. This doubt, and his stubbornness, kept him from rushing to her, from crying out :

" You shan't marry him ! He shan't have you ! You are mine, you must have *me*, and none else ! "

How did he refrain from saying it aloud ? To the day he died he wondered ! What was it that—stronger than the urge of life, stronger than love, than desire, than jealousy—held him back, forced him to remain silent ? The words died stillborn on his lips.

After awhile, when he could speak coherently, he said strangely : " I beg you to remember your old resolution, that if you should ever marry at all you would marry none but a religious man."

She could hardly believe her ears. Was he mocking her ? Was this all he had to say in such an hour ? She wished to laugh, to scream, to weep. But she made no movement. Only her eyes spoke, questioning him reproachfully.

"Are you sure Mr. Williamson is a religious man?" the voice went on, unbelievably.

"I have no proof to the contrary," said she, dully. What did Williamson's being or not being religious matter to Sophy then? Could she suffer more should Williamson be irreligious than she had to suffer because Wesley was religious?

"That you have no proof to the contrary is not enough," said the priest, unreasonably. "No. It is not enough. Before you stake so much upon it, you should have full, positive proof that Mr. Williamson is a religious man."

Sophy put up her hand to her shaking lips. She said with a queer smile:

"I have full, positive proof that *you* are a religious man, haven't I, Mr. Wesley?"

"I? What have *I* to do with this, Sophy?" he asked, and beat his hands together.

"I only consented to it, if you did not object," she said, miserably. "And you tell me you don't object. You give your consent to my marrying Mr. Williamson."

And Sophy began to weep, hopelessly; and John Wesley, with a choking cry, began to weep with her, and beat upon his breast with desperate hands, as if he struck at his own heart. But they wept apart.

Williamson, who thought he had given them long enough time together, and feared to risk more, now came back. He had played a cool and careful game. He had understood the situation perfectly, had kept his head and waited patiently for the chance to spoke the parson's wheel at the right moment. When he thought that moment ripe, he had pressed the Caustons when they were out of temper between Mellichamp's importunities and Wesley's dog-in-the-manger attitude. The result was, that Sophy had been caught in the net.

Williamson knew that the stake was worth playing for. He loved the girl—in his way—but he was not indifferent to the fact that she was the heiress of the childless Caustons. He was unscrupulous and ruthless. He had no intention of letting go what he had gained, and he thought he could rely upon Sophy's simplicity, and her aunt's impatience with Wesley, to help him. As Sophy saw him coming she said piteously :

“ Mr. Wesley . . . I hope I shall always have your . . . your friendship.”

“ I can still be your friend, even though I should not remain in America. That much, Sophy, I can promise you.”

“ Oh ! I hope you won't leave me ! ” she faltered, as Williamson, like Fate, drew nearer.

“ I can't at all judge how God will dispose of me.”

“ But at least you will write to me ? ” She couldn't vision her life with John Wesley gone altogether out of it.

“ It cannot be ! ” said Wesley, with a groan.

Williamson came up, and greeted them pleasantly enough, but cast a sharp glance at them. The clergyman, trained to subdue and conceal his feelings, had himself in hand, but Williamson saw that Sophy had been weeping, and was still painfully agitated. As if to steady and console her, he put out his hand and took hers, small and cold, in a warm clasp. She was so young, so naive, so affectionate, that she looked at him with a certain gratitude.

Wesley repressed a cry of rage as he saw that other man's hand in hers. He could not but compare the two as they stood together, and it came to him with a sense of shock how poor a mate Williamson was for her. The girl was exquisitely fashioned, a creature of wistful beauty. The man was, Wesley thought, “ a person not remarkable for handsomeness, neither for greatness, neither for wit, or

knowledge, or sense, and least of all for religion." He had no right even to the name he bore. Such a man could not be actuated by other than gross motives and desires. How could he make Sophy happy? Yet this was he to whose arms Sophy, in all the beauty of her youth, was driven.

Not trusting himself to speak personally, Wesley tried to speak as their pastor, doing the will of heaven, making a gesture of resignation.

"I implore you, Miss Sophy, to remember the many advices and instructions I have given you," he said.

And then, giving the screw another twist, he saluted the betrothed pair with an holy kiss. Williamson submitted to the salute with what grace he could muster, though he would have liked to give Mr. John Wesley a punch on the nose. But Sophy's lips were cold—oh, unlike the warm young lips he had kissed in the parsonage garden—and her cheek was like a girl's in her coffin. Feeling himself at the end of his tether, Wesley took his leave of her as of one he was to see no more.

He fled to the garden, his place of refuge next to God. Up and down the haunted paths, seeking peace to his soul, but missing it. It seemed to him he was being crucified. And on the cross he wailed, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Sophy! To have to say good-bye for ever to Sophy! Never any more while they lived to take Sophy by the hand, to meet her eyes, to walk here in the garden together. He fell upon a bench upon which she had often sat beside him. Little new leaves on budding vines overshadowed him, at his feet jonquils and daffodils and tulips were pushing up green fingers in the new grass. Everything was gay and glad and young . . . except him

. . . and Sophy. Sophy was going out of his life, taking all that was lovely and desirous with her.

He felt spent and old, and weary of all things under the sun. Nothing was left him . . . except God. There was no one else. There has never been any one or anything or anywhere for the driven soul . . . but God.

He must seek God his refuge. The shadow of a great rock in a weary land. But even God, for the moment, seemed to share the indifference of the world. In seeking and loving the created so idolatrously, had he not slighted the Creator? For now he found himself unable to pray.

. . . "Then indeed the snares of death were about me; the pains of hell overtook me. Yet I struggled for life; and though I had neither words nor thoughts, I lifted up my eyes . . . and supplied the place of them as well as I could, and . . . He so far took the cup from me that I drank so deeply of it no more. . . ."

He went back to his study, and wrote to Mr. Causton, who replied in person within the hour. The magistrate was visibly troubled. Oglethorpe had wished the match between Wesley and Sophy, and he wouldn't be at all pleased to learn that William Williamson, a person of no importance to him, had forestalled it.

Causton knew that Wesley stood well not only with Oglethorpe, but with the Trustees, and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, all powerful at home and in the colonies; but he could not help being provoked with him for the hot-and-cold manner in which he had behaved to Sophy. Wesley had shown his preference for her, he had made advances to her, but he had never come out frankly and asked Causton for her hand. But the magistrate, who knew on which side his own bread was buttered, was anxious to have him for an ally. He liked and trusted him; and he considered that Wesley,

too, would be greatly benefitted by a marriage with his niece.

There was nothing to be gained by the girl's marriage with Williamson, except that it would satisfy his wife, who, indeed, had brought it about, declaring bluntly that she did it to get a troublesome charge off her hands.

" For there'll never be a day's peace for us until Phiky's married," Mrs. Causton had said, not without good reason. " Maybe she can't help it, but she's that kind of girl. There'll always be a man. If it's not Tom Mellichamp, or the parson, or Williamson, it'll be somebody else that makes us just as much trouble. Let me marry her off now and ha' done, i' God's name ! "

Causton, troubled between his wife's tongue and his niece's silent tears, had said little, but he still had hopes of making the arrangement desired by Oglethorpe. Now, with a keen glance at Wesley's pale face, he came to the point at once and said bluntly :

" I don't approve of this sudden match. Williamson asked my consent, but I've neither denied nor given it. I haven't said positively Yes or No. I have often promised Sophy that if she'd agree not to have Mellichamp, she could have any one else she wanted. But what happened between you and her at the Lot ? "

Wesley told him as best he could. The magistrate listened closely, and asked, with impatient astonishment :

" But, man, if you love her, how on earth could you possibly be so overcome as not to press her when she was so much moved ? " And as Wesley only made a despairing gesture by way of reply, he added :

" Well, I'll tell her my thoughts of it once more, and if you wish, so may you. If she isn't then convinced, I must e'en leave her to herself."

But Wesley wanted Causton to say outright : " If you

want to do so, you may have her yet ; but if you won't, another will."

The magistrate, however, thought he had made his meaning plain enough, as indeed he had, to any but one determined to be blind, and who needed to invent quibbles to explain and excuse his conduct to himself.

When Sophy came to evening prayers that night, Williamson accompanied her and kept close to her side. He had begged her not to stay after the rest of the company had gone, scenting danger to himself. But at Wesley's request that she remain, she had done so. Perturbed and uneasy, Williamson walked up and down the street just outside the house. He did not know that he had a strong ally within : Delamotte.

In this sudden and unhoped for turn of affairs which brought Williamson so triumphantly into the game, Delamotte saw the hand of the Almighty directly intervening. He did not propose to allow anything to change the current, now that the Lord had directed it according to his own desires. His intense jealousy, his acute distrust of Sophy's influence upon his friend, refused to allow her the slightest advantage, if he could forestall it. To-night he hung grimly upon Wesley's flank. The lot had been that Wesley was not to see Sophy except in Delamotte's presence, and Wesley had agreed to it, had he not ? Well, then, if Wesley wished to ignore and forget it, Delamotte was determined to remember and act upon it. He would not for one moment leave those two alone together. He knew that Wesley passionately wished him to go.

He refused to budge, and sat there, quiet and disapproving. And just outside, visible every time he passed the door or window, tramped Williamson.

" Miss Sophy," said Wesley, desperately, " you said

yesterday you would take no steps in anything of importance without first consulting me."

"But what else could I do?" she asked earnestly. "Mr. Wesley, what else could I do? I can't live in that house as things are, you know I can't, and you know why. I can't bear these shocks." She paused, and after a moment said abruptly: "My engagement is a very sudden thing. I have no particular inclination to Mr. Williamson, though I don't dislike him. I only promised, if no objection appeared. . . . What else could I do?"

Williamson had stopped for a moment, in his troubled tramping; and as his face appeared at the window looking in, his eyes met Delamotte's. In that one second, Delamotte made him an almost imperceptible sign, unnoticed by Sophy and Wesley, absorbed as they were with each other. But Williamson saw and obeyed. He entered the room, determinedly breaking in upon and ending the discussion, took Sophy by the hand, and forced her away. Wesley stood up like one dumbfounded. Hearing nothing from him to the contrary, Sophy submitted, leaving quietly with her captor. Delamotte, with a great sigh of relief, sank back in his chair. His eyes said to Wesley: "You see how willing she is to leave you and go with him! She is like that!"

The morning found Wesley once more at the Causton house, and asking to see Miss Sophy. This time Williamson, who was also there, was not so complaisant. The minister was asking too much. He had had his chance, and had declined it, and Williamson thought that he should, in all fairness, be willing to abide by his own decision.

Wesley didn't seem willing to do this, and Williamson, jealously aware that the parson was still a power to be reckoned with, made up his mind to be on his guard

against him until Sophy was Mrs. Williamson. You can't trust priests with women ! Williamson knew the terms upon which consent had been literally wrung from Sophy ; and having once risked giving Wesley an opportunity, he did not intend running that risk a second time. As soon as he heard of Wesley's arrival at the house, he put in his own appearance and at once said bluntly :

“ Sir, you shall see Sophy no more until we are married.”

“ What ! This to me ? ” cried Wesley.

“ You can persuade her to anything,” said Williamson, with difficulty controlling his anger. “ After you left us at the Lot yesterday, she would neither eat nor drink for hours, but was crying continually, and in such an agony she was fit for nothing. Do you think I want something like that to happen again ? No. You shan't see her.”

“ Sir,” said Wesley, “ to-morrow you may be her director. To-day she is to direct herself ! ”

They looked at each other with hostile eyes.

“ I will beg for a sheet of paper and a quill,” said Wesley. And Mr. Causton and his wife appearing, what he desired was brought him at once. He sat down in the hall, and wrote :

“ *Miss Sophy : will you see me or not ?* ”

“ You will take this to Sophy, Mrs. Causton,” said the magistrate to his lady in a tone which admitted of no refusal. Mr. Causton still had some faint hope that Mr. Wesley would “ come to his senses before it was too late.”

“ You may as well see him and have done with it once for all,” said her aunt, as the girl stood fingering the slip of paper. “ But I warn ye, Phiky—’tis no use. The man’s possessed of the devil, as I’ve told your uncle many’s the time—but is Thomas Causton one to listen to his wife ? A pox on the pair of them——”

But Sophy had left the room and gone direct to Wesley. As she appeared, he made her an imperative sign to follow him into the garden.

“Are you fully determined?” he asked, with a sort of sombre violence.

She stared at him: was it for this he had come, and she had consented to see him? Had not this been threshed out between them already. And he knew, too, that her determination only rested upon his own consent to it! She said gravely:

“I am: what else remains for me now?” Oh, anything to end this horrible comedy!

“Take care you act upon a right motive!” he said, warningly, forebodingly. “The desire of avoiding crosses is not so, Sophy. Besides, you can’t avoid them. They will follow you and overtake you in every state.”

“Is that,” she asked, in a trembling voice, “all you have come to say to me now, Mr. Wesley?”

“What else shall I say, and still do my duty?” he asked stiffly. “I come as your friend, your pastor; I ask you if you are still determined to pursue this course, in which I fear unhappiness for you; and you tell me that you are so determined. What else, then, is left for me to say or to do?”

Before she could reply, Williamson came hastily out of the house and took her arm.

“My place is here with you, Sophy,” he said resolutely. “You have consented to see Mr. Wesley, even against my advice. Now I ask Mr. Wesley what else he has to say to you? Sir, what is it you wish to say to my affianced wife?”

“I wish to say to you both that you should . . . that you should . . . have your banns regularly published,” said John Wesley. “And it is my duty as a pastor to . . .

to . . . exhort you both . . . to love and serve God . . . and . . . I have to assure you both, that . . . you can, always . . . depend upon . . . my friendship . . . and assistance."

Said Williamson, bowing deeply: "We both thank you. And may we look to see you at the Lot this afternoon?"

"Would you wish it, Miss Sophy?"

"I am always glad to see you, Mr. Wesley," said she, faintly.

Wesley walked to the Lot that afternoon, Delamotte with him. He was curiously calm and collected, even easy in his mind. He felt empty, swept clean and bare; every faculty was dulled, the reaction after excessive emotion. He wondered at his own lack of feeling.

Automatically he went through the polite farce of meeting Sophy and Williamson pleasantly, as one greets casual acquaintances. Presently, in a calm voice, he read them Bishop Hall's "Meditations on Heaven." While he read, he was poignantly aware that Sophy fixed her eyes alternately upon him and Williamson, with an intense and steady observation, as if she were drawing mental pictures of them both and comparing the two. He had no vanity; but he knew that he, though of small stature, was of a distinguished appearance; he knew that he had a handsome countenance; and he knew, too, that Williamson could not stand the contrast to advantage.

After the reading and a prayer, they talked pleasantly for awhile, Wesley giving the conversation, as he always did when he could, a religious bent. When they were leaving, Williamson laid his hand for a moment on the clergyman's arm and said politely:

"I shall always be glad to have your advice, Mr. Wesley, and I hope you will still favour Sophy and me with your

conversation. I shall always look upon it as a particular happiness to us both."

"I hope we shall all be happy in the place we have been reading about," said Wesley, shook hands with them, and bowed himself off.

He had begun that day with pain, and all the day long it had not left him, though he never allowed pain to interfere with any of his duties. Pain to-day was not altogether an evil, for it took his mind for a little while off his mental misery, and for this he could have blessed it. A reading of Job left him easier. He had been unable to eat any dinner, but took instead a heavy draught of Thomas à Kempis. That night he sought and found sympathy among the Germans, whose inexhaustible patience enabled them to listen again and without boredom to their beloved Wesley's oft-told tale of Sophy. They had listened and advised, listened and sympathised, listened and prayed. He could not refrain from speaking of what filled his mind and heart, and they, quietists, mystics, simple and unworldly, understood him. After a prayer and psalm in German, he went home greatly comforted.

There was no such comfort for Sophy, left alone to the anger and disapproval of Mr. Causton, who would neither give his consent to her marriage to Williamson, nor yet outright refuse it.

"I can't say Yes to something that bodes no good to you nor me neither," he said sullenly. "I'm not fool enough to say No, for you'll do what you damn please, anyway."

"You'd neither of you be in this coil now, if you'd listened to *me* from the beginning!" cried Mrs. Causton, her eyes flashing and her face flushed. "Oh yes, both of ye were willing to listen to Mr. Wesley, who doesn't know

his own mind, but has flouted my niece, after running after her for months . . . having her at his house morning, noon and night . . . filling her head with notions enough to crack any one's brains ! The whole town's watching and laughing at us for a lot of zanies ! ”

“ Mrs. Causton——” began her husband heavily.

“ Oh . . . aunt ! ” wailed Sophy.

“ They are ! Hasn't he asked her time and time again to marry him, in such a sly way that she couldn't or wouldn't say yes or no ? Didn't he make it plain to the whole town he'd ■ mind to her for himself, hasn't he kept every eligible young man away from her ? I say nothing of Mellichamp. A pox on Mellichamp, devil take him ! But not satisfied with making Phiky as bad as a Papist, with his prayers at all hours and his fastings and what not, so that she wasn't to be lived with by ordinary Christians, now he must meddle with her when Mr. Williamson wishes to marry her . . . and not every man, let me tell ye, is willing to marry a fanatic ! ”

“ Don't talk to me about the Governor's wishes, Causton, nor wanting Mr. Wesley in our family ! Doesn't almost everybody in Savannah detest Mr. Wesley for a meddler ? Has he ever been known to mind his own business ? Answer me that, both of ye ! Look at the way he went after Miss Bovey about marrying Mr. Burnside, as good ■ man as ever wore shoe-leather. Miss Bovey's out of patience, I'll warrant you, though she won't say so.

“ Why don't you send him about his business, Causton ? Why do you put up with his meddling with Mr. Williamson ? What's the matter with Williamson ? A perfectly respectable young man, and one that knows his own mind, too—I *will* have my say, in spite of the pair of ye ! There'll be no peace in this house until my niece is married, and one thing or 'tother she shall do ! ”

“ Mr. Oglethorpe wants the match with Mr. Wesley ? Aye, does he, now ? Well, does Mr. Wesley himself want it ? Will you take my niece with a rope around her neck and lead her to t’ parson with a ‘ here she is for you an’ it please ye, sir ’ ? And have him tell ye ‘ Thankye kindly, but not to-day ’ ? We have *some* family pride left us, I hope ! My niece can’t allow herself to be publicly jilted, Mr. Causton !

“ What do I care what Mr. Oglethorpe wants ? ‘Tis none of his affairs ! If he’s so busied with who my niece shall marry, will he make a match with her himself ? . . . Not the Governor ! *He’s* in no need of a wife if half one hears is true ! Why should any one buy a cow when he can have all the milk he wants free, and with no bother to build a stable ?——”

“ The devil’s in this woman ! ” shouted Causton, pushing up his wig and showing his shaven poll. “ You’ll wreck us all yet, madam . . . but have your way, have your way ! ” And he rushed from the house. Sophy was left to bear the brunt of the tirade, the bridle having been altogether removed from Mrs. Causton’s tongue and temper. The core of the complaint now was that her niece was being publicly jilted by Mr. Wesley and people were talking.

Sophy knew to her galling hurt that there was some measure of truth in what her aunt said—little backbiting Savannah was rife with gossip about the minister and herself. She knew, too, that he had powerful enemies. His militant, uncompromising attitude toward rum and negro slavery, for which the colonists clamoured and against which Wesley protested furiously, had made him feared and hated. And many who would have been good friends of his were alienated by his intolerant scruples, which refused the offices of the Church to those not of his own

notions. Not that Sophy blamed him for anything ; but that others blamed him for everything, and having an opportunity now to talk about him, they did so with a vengeance.

Causton, too, had many enemies. Many would be glad to see trouble come between the parson and the magistrate. If they were going to say that Wesley had thrown over Causton's niece—

There was no relief in sight for her, she reflected, except Williamson, who was holding her to her promise, but was very patient otherwise. He had sworn that he, alone of them all, loved her most truly and for herself alone. He never upbraided, he was always kind and tender. No one else loved her, except, perhaps, poor Tommy Mell-champ—and most of Tommy's wooing had been threats to murder her. Tommy cared for her, in his own wild way, but he was bad. On the contrary, Williamson was a good man, she thought. He did not terrify her. He said that when she was his wife nobody should threaten her or quarrel with her any more, but she could do as she pleased and be protected, because she would have a husband who loved her. N-no, she didn't love Mr. Williamson as he protested he loved her, but she felt no dislike for him. And he gave her the feeling that there was at least one person near her who thought of her, and wished to protect her. That won her gratitude. Sophy was like that.

She was sitting one forenoon in the Causton garden with Williamson, when Miss Bovey and John Burnside called. Sophy had always loved Miss Bovey, the more so because John Wesley was so devoted to her, and her house was, so to say, a sanctuary for him.

The two girls kissed, the two men shook hands. Miss Bovey began at once to speak of Mr. Wesley's attitude

toward her engagement, and deplored it. She couldn't to save her understand why he should raise objections to dear John, except that he didn't wish her to marry anybody at all, but to become a deaconess and devote her whole life to church work. That's what John thought, too. Of course they both liked Mr. Wesley, they were perfectly devoted to him, but still . . . under the circumstances—

"Under the circumstances, I don't want to be married by him," said John Burnside. "And that's the reason why I have persuaded my dear girl to go to Purysburg to-night and have the Swiss minister there marry us. And as Miss Sophy here is to be our bridesmaid, we want her to come along with us. That's what we've come to ask her. Will you come with us, Sophy?"

Sophy looked at Williamson, who saw how anxious she was to go with her friends.

"And of course, Mr. Williamson, you're expected to come along, too."

"Naturally, since Sophy is going," smiled the other. "She must be your bridesmaid, Miss Bovey. I think I can understand how you and Mr. Burnside feel about the minister. In your place, I shouldn't want Mr. Wesley to perform the ceremony for me, either."

"You'll come, then?"

"Of course," agreed Williamson affably. "Anything in the world I could do to oblige any friends of Sophy's—" He bowed, gallantly enough.

Sophy squeezed his hand. He was really very kind, he fell in with one's wishes so readily. How had she ever doubted William's heart? She wished to escape from the Causton house, if only for a few days, and he was making it possible for her. He had a good deal of influence over her aunt, who never quarrelled with him as she

did with others. She could be depended upon to let Sophy go with Miss Bovey, now that Williamson would accompany them.

Mr. Williamson did some very quick thinking. He had a gnawing fear of Wesley, who could, if he wished, induce Sophy to change her mind in regard to her engagement, which was but tentative. Williamson realized how slight his hold upon her really was, though by little and little he had been adroitly strengthening it. He reflected that it would be the height of good policy to remove her at this crucial time from the minister's immediate influence, and have her to himself with none to interfere. Purysburg would offer the chance he needed.

"Suppose we leave the ladies alone for a while to discuss their affairs, while you and I have a little talk about ours, Mr. Burnside?" he suggested. But while he listened so sympathetically to Burnside's plans, he didn't tell his own. Secretly, Williamson hated John Wesley, and was delighted to forward any affair that would annoy or chagrin the man he recognized as his formidable rival. Burnside, wounded by Wesley's behaviour to himself, had submitted to having his banns published in Savannah; but he was determined not to be married by Wesley. He had had the banns published at the same time in Purysburg, and persuaded Miss Bovey to get married there. Williamson, all sympathy and interest, fell in wholeheartedly with the plan, which would enable him to carry out his own.

"You had better go on home with Miss Bovey now, Sophy, and I'll come for you after supper," he suggested, as the visitors were leaving. "I can then have a talk with your aunt, and I don't think there'll be the slightest trouble about your going to Purysburg."

He watched the three walk off together, and smiled to himself. Then he went in and talked for an hour with

Mrs. Causton. They understood each other very well, and as a rule agreed.

"Sophy's going over to Purysburg with Miss Bovey for a day or two. Mr. Williamson's going after her, to fetch her back," Mrs. Causton told her husband, casually. "And let me tell you that I for one thank my dear Lord for a few days of peace and quiet in my own house, without being pestered out of my five senses."

"Well, let her go. I'd like a little peace and quiet in my own house, too, madam," said Causton sourly.

Wesley, of course, knew nothing of the plan. He was ill, and in much pain ; so ill, that he thought his days were numbered. He didn't greatly care. Life offered little to make him wish to cling to it. Even that great mission, whatever it might be, that from his earliest years he had visioned as lying in wait for him somewhere in the road ahead, lost, for the moment, its mysterious power. It seemed to him that across the page of his life was written, "*It is finished.*" In this Slough of Despond he wrote his will. At the same time he did not let slip a single duty that he could possibly perform.

Ill, then, and despondent, he was totally unprepared for the news that came upon him like a thunderbolt, and he staggered under the blow. Miss Bovey, his dear friend Miss Bovey, had gone to Purysburg with John Burnside, and been married there by the Swiss minister. And Sophy had gone with them, to be married at the same time to William Williamson.

Williamson's scheme had succeeded. Ruthless and determined, he had gotten Sophy to himself, pressed her mercilessly, and literally forced the bewildered young creature into marrying him. John Wesley's sweetheart was Williamson's wife.

CHAPTER XVIII

GETHSEMANE

HE was for a time like a man bludgeoned. He moved automatically, carrying on his labours through force of habit. Sometimes he heard his own voice repeating vague words, which had no meaning for him. And he had a curious sense as of standing apart, watching what appeared to be himself performing, mechanically, tasks from which his mind was altogether dissociated. *Sophy a wife. Sophy, in another man's arms. Sophy, who belonged to him.* He had never desired Sophy as he desired her now. With a more than physical clarity of vision he saw her always before his eyes : her hair, her slender throat, the curve of her breast— He experienced an agony so frightful that it all but deprived him of reason. He experienced a sense of desolation so immense that it seemed to him he was lost, in time and in eternity.

His imagination dragged him as by the hair of his head into that bridal chamber, and though he winced, and cringed, and would have fled, it held him fast. It was as if a voice whispered in his ears, “ So should Sophy have been in *your* arms. So should that bright head have lain on *your* breast.” He had read, somewhere, that the cruellest of Chinese torturers cut off the eyelids of selected victims, who are left to the atrocious agony of a lidless stare ; and it seemed to him that he himself was being thus horribly tortured, until he could have howled from pain.

His heart cried out against Sophy. She was guilty, she

was false, before God and men. He couldn't, he wouldn't, admit to himself that her marriage was legal, even under the common law. No law, human or divine, could make that iniquitous compact right.

She must know that what she had done was wrong. Why, she had not waited until the banns had been published so much as once—and that in itself proved how wrong—how illegal—her marriage was. She and the man who called himself her husband, were citizens of a British colony, members of the Established Church of England, under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of London, whose authority was vested in God and the King. That called for the publication of their banns, in a church, by a clergyman of the Establishment. And they had rushed off, and been clandestinely married by a Carolina minister, who had acted illegally. Under such circumstances, was Sophy's marriage legal and valid . . . in the eyes of God ?

He could forgive the Burnsides. They had known that he didn't approve of their marriage, and they had spared him the unpleasant duty of having to perform the ceremony. And they had had their banns published. Their marriage was strictly regular. Nothing at all like the flagrant offence of Sophy's and Williamson's. With the terrible fact of Sophy's marriage confronting him, the Burnsides' behaviour meant nothing. They could still remain his friends. He had never been in love with the bride—

But his tender ritualistic conscience troubled him as to the strict validity of the Williamson wedding. He explained this to his friends at some length. Then he wrote out his case, to be laid before the Bishop of London's Commissary, resident in South Carolina. The case being presently reviewed, Sophy's marriage was not declared in-

valid, but marriage without the publication of banns was in future forbidden in His Britannic Majesty's domains.

Mr. Wesley's conscientious insistence upon what he thought proper formalities, and his openly expressed doubts as to the validity of marriages performed without them, somehow increased his unpopularity in Savannah. It wasn't sportsmanlike.

"It may be technically right," said Savannah heatedly. "But it looks wrong. It looks too much like spite."

Their pastor's unsportsmanlike behaviour provoked and disgusted Savannah. They could stand—though not without grumblings—their Governor's "living in adultery with a man's wife at Frederica," for at least he carried his amours like a gallant gentleman, and without noise, except the noise of other ladies' tongues. If the man's wife in Frederica had preferred another lover, Mr. Oglethorpe would have smiled, bowed, and wished the lady a pleasant journey. He would never have raised a row!

Savannah said James Oglethorpe was a sinner and a gentleman, and John Wesley was neither. They said Wesley had wanted Sophy Hopkey for himself; but now that she had married somebody else, as she had a perfect right to do if she wished, he should behave as one supposed an English gentleman behaved under such circumstances. Mr. Wesley was doing nothing of the sort. He was questioning, if, indeed, she were legally married!

She had come to church the Sunday after her marriage, quite as if, he thought resentfully, she had done nothing wrong. Quite as if she were still the pure maiden he had loved. He was agonizingly conscious of her presence, seeing her "through the eyelashes." When he glanced in her direction, it was to all appearances casually enough, but he was tense with repressed emotion.

It came to him that there must be, there should be in the justice of God, some sign of shame upon her, some visible mark of the beast. But no. She was as sweetly, innocently virginal as some girl-saint kneeling before Mary Virgin with folded palms. And he remembered, with a horrible pang, how he had thought her—oh, long, long ago!—like a white candle burning with a clear flame on the altar . . . Sophy, Sophy!

Flames flickered before his eyes. It was not just! She was not changed at all. You could never tell . . . looking at her . . . that she was Williamson's wife. No blush on the clear brow, no shame in the soft eyes, no quivering of the lovely lips! She was as she had always been, wistful and mild. Why, great God! she could not have seemed fairer or purer had she been his own bride, instead of Williamson's!

A few days later, meeting Williamson on the street, the two men fell into step together. Wesley had never liked him. He could never understand why such a man had been allowed to approach Sophy, much less marry her. The clergyman never told what he knew—that Williamson had no right to that name, that he was the bastard son of a Mr. Taylor of Bridewell, that he had been very wild in England; and that there was scant hope of making a crooked stick straight. More than once the cruel words of Job came to his mind, "*In iniquity wast thou begotten, and in sin did thy mother conceive thee.*" This feeling of dislike was outside of all his jealousy. He had no faith in the man. But this he kept to himself.

"Will you not come into the parsonage for awhile?" Wesley asked politely.

The bridegroom, who was evidently surprised, now surprised the clergyman in his turn, by a muttered Yes, he would go in, as he wished to speak to Mr. Wesley.

Once inside the door, Williamson turned upon his host. The bridegroom was furiously angry, and casting off all restraint, gave free vent to his wrath.

"I came into your house," he cried, red in the face, "to tell you that you've behaved damned bad, Mr. Wesley—damned bad, sir! I can't but think you hate her, and me too. And you know, and I know why."

"Sir!"

"Sir, let me tell you I have looked upon Sophy as my wife for about six weeks before our marriage. She was promised to me, and that time that should have been the happiest in my life was embittered to me by your cursed interference! Not my happiness only, but hers, was wrecked by you. Why? What for, Mr. Wesley?"

"Sir, I am her pastor. I had the good of her immortal soul at heart. I spoke but as my duty to God demanded."

"Oh, indeed! And did your duty to God demand that you should torment Sophy?" cried Williamson.

"A clear conscience is never tormented by just reproofs. Nay, it welcomes them."

"Oh, I know all about that sort of thing!" said the other, with a sneer. "Let's keep to plain facts. You have tormented Sophy almost out of her senses, sir. What did you hope to gain by it?"

"My friendship—" began Wesley. But the other interrupted harshly:

"She knows what your friendship is worth. You did not love her—she realized that at the last. You are one that can love only yourself, and having your own way, as Mrs. Causton has said plainly, ever since she knew you."

"My humble respects," said Mr. Wesley, with a bitter smile, and a low bow, "to the chief magistrate's excellent lady!"

But Williamson merely made an impatient gesture of the hand.

“ You have so troubled my poor little wife’s peace,” he said, “ that she has since told me that she would not come within your house ever again. Nay, she had begged I would not come, either. Further yet, Mr. Wesley”—was there a note of triumphant malice in the fellow’s voice, a gleam of triumphant malice in his eyes?—“ she has implored me not to go out alone, fearing that if Mr. Delamotte or you caught me thus, you would murder me.”

“ Are you mad, man? I murder you? Delamotte murder you? ”

“ Aye. My wife fears ye. With what cause, and for what cause, you know, Mr. Wesley! ”

John Wesley looked at the man with starting eyes. He put his hand to his head.

“ What have ye said to her, what have ye done to her, that ye have crazed her among ye? ” he gasped. “ She is not in her right mind when she can think such things! I insist that you let me see her, that I shall talk to her myself! ”

“ She will never for a moment consent to it,” shouted Williamson. “ Nor will I,” he added passionately, and rushed out, leaving Wesley all but distracted. Had he obeyed impulse, he would have rushed to her at once. He was torn, this way and that—at one moment, he could have knelt beside her and wept; at another, he could have taken her by the hair of her head and dragged her through the streets.

A few days later, Williamson made his unexpected appearance, and told his pastor abruptly:

“ You may talk with her if you will.”

Distrusting himself to say more, the young man left as abruptly as he had come. He was still a bridegroom, and

he could not yet say nay to his bride. If she wished to see her pastor, and wept softly, how could a brand new husband say her nay? The man had a passion for her now, and he yielded to her persuasions, though unwillingly. But he did not like her pastor any the better.

Mr. Wesley had resumed his former pleasant relations with the Burnsides. Now that their marriage was an accomplished fact, he concerned himself no more about it, and ignored his former disapproval. Nor did Mr. Burnside and his wife hold any enmity against him. Never for one moment did their faith in their pastor waver, and their house was always open to him. It was, then, in the Burnside house that he now met Sophy, only the three of them being present at the interview.

He had no good wishes to extend to the bride. He thought she had behaved execrably, that she wasn't going to be happy, and he hardly thought she deserved to be. Why had she needed to marry anybody? Thecla had remained a virgin . . . content to listen humbly to Paul . . . and thus glorify God. Why could not Sophy have done the same? Wesley confronted the young wife, with a pale and set countenance.

"You were," he accused her, "insincere before your marriage; and from what your . . . husband . . . tells me, you are ungrateful since."

"I was never insincere to you," she defended herself mildly. "Never, never! You knew all along just what was happening. Why, on the noon of the day when my aunt intercepted Tom Mellichamp's letter, I had just told Mr. Williamson I should be glad of him as a friend, but I would never accept him as a lover."

His eyes said coldly: "*I don't believe you.*"

"And you know, too, what followed," went on the soft voice, "when the letter fell into my aunt's hands.

You knew, and you——” She stopped, and blushed painfully.

“ You mean . . . if I had spoken to you outright . . . at that time . . . ”

“ I mean that I would not have denied you had you pressed me to marriage at any time when my temper was so ruffled,” she said it bravely, meeting his eyes with a look as straight as his own. “ He . . . my husband . . . understood . . . and——”

“ And what one man did not, the other seized the chance to do,” finished Mrs. Burnside.

“ But what did you mean when you told him you were afraid Delamotte and I would murder him if we caught him alone ? ” cried Wesley.

“ But it was not you, it was Mr. Mellichamp and his friends who I feared might injure Mr. Williamson,” said the bride. “ But indeed, Mr. Wesley, many instances of your anger and resentment have been related to me since my marriage, though I could hardly believe them. Nobody could ever provoke me to say anything disrespectful against you. The most I have ever said was, that no matter what you might say or do hereafter, you had been my friend, and done me more service than any person living.”

The mild eyes, the quiet voice, had their ineffable effect upon him. She had not, then, changed so much as he had feared, though she was lost to him. He was grateful for this, and yet he had the desire to weep. And the very next morning, as in the days which seemed so incredibly far away and long ago, she knelt at the altar and received the sacrament from his hands.

He had no peace ; he had no hope. His days passed with a miserable monotony—days in which nothing could happen. But he kept himself busy—translating, refining

his hymns, copying them in his firm perfect handwriting, setting them to music, singing them in the garden with Delamotte. He was writing, too, an "Account of Miss Sophy," which, with his ghastly lack of reticence and of delicacy, he read to the Burnsides among others. Among many other letters he wrote one to his brother Sam, giving him an account of his love affair and its disastrous ending.

"I'm sorry," Sam wrote back. "You're not likely to make another match."

Presently, as though nothing had happened, he called upon the Caustons, where the bride and groom now resided. He simply had to see her. He could not face these days so empty of Sophy. And so he went to the Caustons', and conversed amiably with the assembled family, who were at first somewhat nervous, and was welcomed gladly by Mr. Causton, and with heavy politeness by Williamson. He transcribed verses for Sophy. He prayed for her. He would do this without hypocrisy, for, at the moment, she was not the one single absorbing idea in his mind—something else encroached upon her. He had been watching events in the colony with that cold, clear intellect of his, and what to him seemed a frightful menace was approaching. Afar off he foresaw it, though it was as yet no bigger than the cloud the size of a man's hand, appearing in the sky. What John Wesley prophetically foresaw, and girded up his loins to give battle to, was chattel slavery.

He hated and dreaded slavery, white and black. From the day of his coming to Georgia he had sensed its insidious approach, and he had lifted up his voice and in the name of God denounced it and all who would bring it to pass. Naturally, he made enemies ; just as naturally, he despised such enemies.

And in the meantime, he betook himself to learning

Spanish with the aid of Doctor Nunes, a Spanish Jew who had come into the Colony with others of his people, and had been permitted to remain by the sound common sense and charity of Oglethorpe. Wesley already knew enough of the language to read it, even to translate a fine hymn or two, but he wished to speak and pray with his Jewish parishioners, "some of whom," he said truthfully, "seem nearer the mind that was in Christ, than many who call him Lord." The companionship of the intellectual, cultivated, gentle Jew was an unmixed blessing to the scholarly Christian.

There had always been more or less anxiety in the Province about the Indians, as must always be feared from people who are swindled. On one such fright, Causton sent for his pastor, among others, to come to his house for a consultation. When he went there, Wesley saw Sophy, for a few minutes. He asked hurriedly :

"Is all well?"

"Oh, yes, as well as could be expected," said she, and walked away—to avoid further conversation with him, he surmised. For she had but recently said to him one morning after communion :

"Mr. Williamson desires I won't talk with you. He thinks it makes me uneasy."

Since then he had had no further speech with her, for she was plainly avoiding his society. This pained him inexpressibly. He hardly knew what to do. But observing her still fond of the Burnsides, he told them solemnly that God would require at their hands the services which he himself could no longer perform for her. From time to time thereafter, he had conveyed through them such advices as he thought she needed most. And she had thanked them sweetly, they reported to him, had taken the advice meekly, and made fair promises.

But he was not satisfied. He missed her. He felt bitterly that she was slipping away from him, that he no longer came first with her, and that the influence he had once wielded was altogether withdrawn, superseded by Williamson. And the imperious and autocratic temper of Wesley found this unbearable. There were nights when he could not sleep.

He watched Sophy from a distance, and it seemed to him that but little heed was paid to his words conveyed through the Burnsides. Then he decided that he must speak to her himself ; for in truth he was like a man starving ; he was consumed with unappeasable hunger to see her face to face, to speak to her even for a pitiful few minutes. The opportunity came sooner than he had hoped, at the Causton house, but it was without privacy.

The young wife admitted at once, with her usual meekness, her large obligations to him. But, brushing aside her hesitating speech, he exhorted her "to fulfill all righteousness." Before they parted he gave her "that much controverted advice which, fairly represented, I will avow before all the world : *'In things of an indifferent nature, you cannot be too obedient to your husband ; but if his will should be contrary to the will of God, you are to obey God rather than man.'*"

Just what did John Wesley mean when he so advised Sophy Williamson, and how was she to take his meaning and follow his advice ? Had not his own will hitherto stood to her as the will of God ? If her husband's will conflicted with Wesley's—and thus with God's—was she not rather to obey Wesley . . . and God . . . than Williamson ? Was not this what the clergyman's advice, if taken literally, actually amounted to ? Williamson had taken Sophy's body : would he now take too her precious

mind and soul away from her spiritual director, as Wesley, in a large measure, still remained ?

That day being Good Friday, she had voluntarily fasted until the evening, and the next morning, after he had admitted her to the holy communion, he spoke to her again :

“ I implore you to remember my words of yesterday,” he said. “ You are to obey God rather than man.”

They had met in the street, and were walking slowly side by side. For some time she had kept step, silently, pondering his words. Then, as if she had made up her mind, she stopped, and said directly :

“ You will remember what I told you some time ago, that my husband did not wish me to speak with you because he was afraid it made me uneasy ? He says now that he has changed his mind about that.”

“ Why ? ” he asked, with considerable asperity. That anybody should dare to forbid Sophy talking with *him*, for any cause whatever !

“ He says it is because he is afraid it will make me too strict,” she said, with childlike candour.

Wesley swallowed this, and found it bitter to the palate. Yes, the world, in the person of Williamson—that illegitimate son of a loose-moralled father—was winning this beloved soul away from him, its natural protector. She came no more to daybreak prayers ; or to walk with him in the parsonage garden, to sing and pray, to hang upon his every word. She was no more his beloved pupil, he her adored teacher. Body and soul, she was lost to him.

He had up to this time looked upon himself as only temporarily in charge of the Savannah parish, regarding himself as a tentative missionary to the Indians, to begin his labours among them as soon as it could be arranged ; and thus he had not complied with all the formalities which

would have legally constituted him the incumbent. But now he "publicly subscribed the prayers," thus accepting his position of rector of Christ Church Parish in Savannah. Standing thus on firmer ground, he could, he thought, afford to take a firmer stand. His sermons were too often harsh and satirical, and his hearers read into them thinly veiled attacks upon certain townfolk whose views didn't tally with the preacher's. These people sat back and listened stolidly. They were not so stolid when it came to hating Parson Wesley.

And yet things might have gone well with John Wesley in Georgia. He might have become the most powerful—though never the most popular—man in the colony, had not the case of Sophy Williamson so rankled and burned in his bosom that it became an obsession with him. He could not recover from the shock of that calamitous marriage. Though, as all must, he could recover from the first and worst paroxysms of rage and grief, and partly readjust himself to circumstances, the canker remained, and destroyed every possible hope of happiness or usefulness in Savannah.

Sophy no longer came to him ; no longer sought his advice. He doubted that she adhered to the strict rules he had laid down for her guidance. She was disobeying God and John Wesley, choosing rather to obey . . . her husband. Brooding on this terrible fall from grace into carnality, he began to doubt whether he would admit her to the Communion until she had, in some manner or other to be later determined by himself, admitted her fault and declared her repentance. He doubted all the more because he had been told that she had left off fasting, and because she neglected all the early morning prayers, though still admitting her obligations to both, "which made a wide difference between her neglect and that of others !"

When he spoke of this doubt to Delamotte, that young Timothy of his protested against it. Delamotte knew that Mrs. Williamson was to all appearances a good and virtuous wife, and a good Christian. He was perfectly satisfied with Sophy. Since, under God, she had married Williamson and not Wesley, there was no earthly reason why she shouldn't receive the holy communion. Why couldn't Wesley let well enough alone? Delamotte persuaded him to bear with Sophy until he had spoken with her once more.

The younger man perceived, with something approaching consternation, that she had again become the chief object of his friend's thoughts, the centre around which all other events revolved. She had, he suspected, been so all along. There was something fatal about that girl!

The holy lover who was her pastor went to William Williamson and spoke gravely to him about his wife. He prayed for her incessantly. He talked about nothing else, until the alarmed Delamotte interfered, and got him out for one whole afternoon felling trees, hoping to divert his unhealthy thoughts by hard labour. In vain. Wesley was like a man possessed. When he wasn't talking about "the case" now, he was racking his brain writing about it, setting it down in detail, a sort of gospel according to John.

Whenever he could find or invent the occasion, he was at the Caustons', both at their town and country houses. Once he managed to speak to Sophy, "under the shed at Mr. Causton's, from seven till evening prayers." It was the fifth conversation he had had with her since her marriage. He "exhorted her to avoid all insincerity as she would avoid fire; to hold fast all the means of grace; and never to give way to so vain a thought as that she could attain the end without them."

Sophy promised, and appeared deeply serious. He

prayed his labour was not in vain. What the young wife did not and could not tell him was, that her husband had forbidden her to attend peep o' day prayers, and had constrained her to cease fasting ; because before her lay the coming of motherhood. That last had never, even in his worst hours, occurred to Wesley. His thought simply could not vision Sophy bearing another man's baby.

When he visited Mrs. Causton in an illness, the Causton family professed their obligation to their pastor and friend, for that, they assured him, was how they looked upon him. Even Mrs. Causton seemed to like her pastor better than she had ever done, and when he appeared, she insisted on keeping him to meals.

And so that long and tragic Spring passed, and June had come to Georgia ; and little sandy Savannah thrrove and prospered fairly well, and was fairly peaceful. And everybody lived out of doors. But all through the golden days John Wesley walked alone ; his bread was bitterness and his drink tears.

Between him and the colonists the gulf was widening. Going to hear Mr. Wesley preach of a Sunday now was a test of how thick or how thin one's skin was. They would try to introduce slavery, they would break faith with God and the Trustees, they would outrage humanity? The little Samson girded up his loins and went after his Philistines. He told them in vitriolic diatribes exactly who and what they were, and what he thought of them. Wesley gave Savannah such a headache that many worthy citizens turned green at sight of him, and his voice was as the croaking of ravens in many ears.

One fine Saturday he went to pay a pastoral call on the Brownfields, friends of long standing. John Brownfield was not at home, but the pastor sat down to talk with Mrs. Brownfield. And presently the conversation fell upon

Mrs. Williamson, the subject nearest his heart ; in the course of their talk, the woman told him that dear John had warned her of Miss Sophy long since.

“ Polly,” Brownfield was reported to have said, “ have a care of Miss Sophy. You are no match for her.”

Seeing that she had caught Mr. Wesley’s ear with a vengeance, Mrs. Brownfield went on :

“ On Sunday night, before the stir about your letter, I dined at Mr. Causton’s ; and being after dinner in the garden with Miss Sophy, I taxed her with inconstancy to Tom Mellichamp. She said she was not inconstant to him, but loved him as well as ever, and would come to my house to speak to me about him. So the very next Tuesday she came, and desired me to send a letter for her to Dolly Mellichamp, to give poor Tommy an opportunity of clearing himself. I told her I would not do it for the world, without first asking Mr. Brownfield’s advice, which I did, and his advice was to have nothing at all to do with it. The next day she came to me crying, and said, ‘ I am ruined : my uncle says they have put Tommy in jail again.’ ”

Wesley turned this piece of gossip over and over in his mind. The thing was past and gone. There was no more question of Mellichamp, or whether or not Sophy was or was not inconstant to him. She saw him no more. He was out of her life, now that she was another man’s wife. Neither could it any more affect John Wesley’s.

Yet it seemed to John Wesley that she had been insincere to himself, that the wrong, if any, had been done to him. What should he do now ? Go and tax her with her fault, between him and her alone ? He wished to do so, both as her friend and her pastor. But this, because of Williamson, he was unable to do. It seemed to him then, that his only course was to inquire of others—his

usual procedure—whether they thought this might be a false accusation.

He went after Brownfield first. Frankly, how far might one rely on his wife's word ?

" Well," admitted Brownfield, naturally protecting his wife as well as he could, " perhaps Polly won't tell you *all* the truth she knows ; but you can be assured she won't tell you anything but the truth."

" Have you ever advised your wife to have a care of Miss Sophy ? Think carefully ! "

" Well, yes, Mr. Wesley, I did tell her Miss Sophy was above her match."

" Again : did your wife ever ask your advice about sending a letter from Miss Sophy to Dolly Mellichamp ? "

" Yes, she did. And I told her to have nothing at all to do with it. 'Twasn't her business," said Brownfield, who would have preferred that his wife had said nothing to their pastor ; but, as she had, the husband meant to stand by her.

Husband and wife having thus loyally supported each other, Wesley had no further doubt of the lady's absolute veracity, and his bile was further stirred against Sophy Williamson. *Traitress !*

Married women seemed to have a curious fondness for confessing iniquities—their own and other people's—to the two Wesleys, these confessions always bearing upon the Wesleys themselves. Some months ago a young matron had come to John Wesley in a state of great agitation and remorse, and under the usual promise of secrecy had poured into his upstanding ear the story of her share in a plot which she said Oglethorpe had laid against him " to cure him of his enthusiasm."

" Sir," the fair penitent had cried, " I have known no rest till I told you the whole affair. Oh, Mr. Wesley . . .

I myself was urged to a behaviour against you which I am ashamed now even to mention ! Miss Sophy and myself were ordered by Mr. Oglethorpe, if we did not succeed, even to deny you nothing. . . .”

As that was told him before Sophy’s marriage, even the crass credulity of John Wesley had refused to accept such evidence against the young girl. No. It was not true where Sophy was concerned. But—the confessing lady . . . and James Oglethorpe ? That was a horse of another colour !

For as a matter of fact Oglethorpe did very much desire to cure Wesley of his excessive zeal. He had tried to induce him to settle down and stay in Savannah. And recognizing the young man’s complete ignorance of the Indian character and his unfitness to go among the untutored but sly and subtle children of the forests, he had tried to wean Wesley of that desire. Oglethorpe had a pretty accurate idea of what would happen if Wesley went among the Indians.

“ Why, sir,” Oglethorpe had said one day in the course of a conversation about the red men, “ there are Indians who would kill any man in the colony . . . *any man* . . . for a bottle of whisky and think nothing of it.” And he had fixed his fine eyes meaningly upon Mr. Wesley, sincerely hoping he would take the hint to heart.

Wesley took the hint, but not as Oglethorpe had meant he should. He was startled and horrified. He took that hint about Indians being willing to kill *any man* for so little as a bottle of whisky, not as a warning but as a threat against himself. The Governor was at that particular time somewhat more than usual worried and distract, and he had had for some days very slight contact with the minister. Wesley thought Oglethorpe’s countenance was changed toward him, presumably because the soldier knew

that his scandalous plot with the women had been discovered. A few days later an Indian for some reason of his own actually followed the Great Chief's little white medicine man. Wesley took it for granted that the savage had been directed by James Oglethorpe to frighten, if not to murder him outright.

It never once occurred to him to scent in these mischief-making stories a part of the scheme to run the troublesome parsons out of Georgia. It never once occurred to him to remember the case of Charles in Frederica, and draw inferences. He had given Sophy the benefit of the doubt then, because he loved her. But in the case of this latest gossip of the Brownfields, he did not give Sophy the benefit of any doubt—because he still loved her.

Pondering the matter in his heart he came to the conclusion that the best thing he could do would be to go to Mrs. Causton, who knew her niece better than any one else, tell her the story, and hear what she had to say in the girl's defence. He would withhold only the names of his informants, saving the friendly Brownfields from the natural resentment of the Causton family.

Mrs. Causton listened with mounting anger, biting her lips and tapping her foot.

" Sophy has never said anything false, never dissembled in any way with you or anybody else ! " she exclaimed. " This is altogether a lie—and you ought to know it's a lie ! I protest against it ! " And raising her eyes and holding up her hands, she cried vehemently :

" By the Lord God, Sophy is as innocent as a newborn babe ! I know she has as great a value for you as for any one alive—except for Mr. Williamson."

Except for Mr. Williamson ! That was the last straw. Wesley hurried home and told the story to Delamotte ; who could have explained to him that—even granting its

truth—he was most unwarrantably meddling in a matter which no longer concerned him ; but, seeing him like one possessed of an evil spirit, Delamotte, after a moment's reflection, contented himself with advising, even imploring his friend not to act hastily, and to admit Mrs. Williamson to the communion table should she present herself.

It must have become clear to Delamotte that Wesley's scrupulosities wore a dark-green tinge, and that his whole behaviour was imbued with personal rancour. For Wesley managed to discover a new hindrance : he found —being so great a stickler for formalism—that Sophy couldn't admit herself to communion. Scouring his Register, he found to his satisfaction that she had absented herself five times in April and May only ! And in this happy month of June, four times, viz. : the 11th, 12th, 24th, and 29th. Oh, sinful, backsliding Sophy ! To clear up all differences, he determined to speak to her yet once again.

And then he went out, in the sweet June weather, and “buried the only child of a fond parent, who had been snatched away from him in a moment, falling into a well and being stifled there before those with whom he had just been playing, could help him. A happy misfortune, I trust, to his father, who sees and adores the hand of God therein, and,

*humbled in the dust
Now owns with tears the punishment was just.”*

Mr. Causton had been for some time under a heavy fire of criticism and complaint, and Wesley knew it. He was not surprised to receive a request from the magistrate, one morning, to come to his house and hear all that was said against him, that he might have chance to clear himself, or to remove the cause of complaint.

When the magistrate had concluded his list of what he called slanders, Wesley nodded gravely.

"I have heard it all before, and more," he said tactfully. And he leaned forward in his chair, and in a quiet voice related all that *he* had heard to the magistrate's blame, and exactly what he knew. It was part of his duty as a shepherd to tell the truth to the sheep, wasn't it? Why then should he shirk it in favour of this bellwether who of them all needed it most?

"I hadn't expected you, of all people alive, to join in with my enemies!" cried the bellwether, leaping to his feet as if stung. "Now you listen to what I've got to say to *you*!"

Wesley did listen to some very warm reproaches and some unvarnished comments. But the stubborn little man stood his ground, reiterating that it was his duty to tell the truth, whether anybody would or wouldn't listen to it. No power on earth could have intimidated the spirit of John Wesley.

The two men parted coldly, with hostile looks. Yet when word was brought to the clergyman, a few days later, that Mr. Causton was down with a fever, Wesley went to him at once, and attended him daily. This he did, too, for every other parishioner, friend or foe, who was in dangerous or painful illness, or trouble of any sort, and needed the consolation of religion.

"I had a good hope from the manner wherewith Mr. Causton bore his illness and the thankfulness he showed for my attending him that it would be a blessing both to him and his dependents," Wesley said simply.

There was much sickness and a heavy toll of lives in little Savannah during that torrid, sad July. Old men and youths, women and little children went. In and out of stricken houses, whether of friends or foes, visiting the

sick, trying to console the living, burying the dead ; tireless, unconquerable, went the short, erect figure of John Wesley.

He might, and he did, make many grievous mistakes, err, blunder, stumble, all but miss the path, because his eyes were too full of passionate tears. Those tears were to wash his eyes so clear in later years, that they saw a pathway to the Father for the humblest. Even now, in Savannah that hated him, that never could have understood or loved him, and that drove him out, none dared say he was not in the hour of trial a faithful labourer in the vineyard.

CHAPTER XIX

SUMMER, 1737

IF he could only have let well-enough alone ! If he could only have been content to mind his own business, satisfied to tread the straight plain path of his own work ! Had he shut his ears to the malicious tattlings of gossiping women, the grumbling of disgruntled men, he would have grown into a power against which the tides of evil gathering in the Province would have beat in vain.

Oglethorpe had hoped to find in the Oxford priest as it were an Aaron to his own Moses, who would hold up his arms and strengthen him in the sight of all Israel. But the Oxford priest was too intensely egoistic ever to be anything but himself. Besides, there were times when he did not approve of Oglethorpe—he had written him reprobating letters more than once. And let James Oglethorpe be never so fine and bold a leader, so sagacious a colonizer, so gallant a soldier that he was carving out a small empire for England alone and unaided, John Wesley could never for a moment forget the heinous fact that the Georgia Moses was “ living in open adultery with a man’s wife at *Frederica* ”—probably two men’s wives. . . .

Although he attended to his duties faithfully, he could not give his work an undivided mind. He could not view anything or anybody impersonally, for his imperious will had been crossed, and his dearest affections irremediably wounded. Frustrated love, with its consequent jealousy, so preyed upon that it had grown by degrees into

a consuming rancour, poorly concealed under the guise of scruples which only the most intolerant of ritualists could have raked up ; and which to any eyes less blinded by passion must have worn the ugly aspect of persecution.

He was still in love with a woman who had become another man's wife. He still desired her, still wished to see her, to speak to her. He could not banish her from his mind, he could not tear her out of his heart, he could not let her alone. He knew that, while she still regarded him with kindness and respect, she no longer loved him. He could hardly be expected to forgive her for that.

He had this torment of frustration and jealousy to bear, in addition to the performing of those duties which works of supererogation made more onerous and exacting. He kept up, too, his laborious studies ; and he had the daily contacts with the troublesome mixed horde which made up his parish, irritating to them all in the heavy, enervating heat of a climate to which they were still, in a measure, new. And every now and then he was flicked on the raw by the sight of Sophy on Williamson's arm, the pair of them utterly absorbed, and with no slightest thought of *him*. It was unbearable.

Possessed by a very devil of unrest, and blinded by tears and fears, his eyes could not see the truth. He could only realize that he had been injured, that he had been deceived by one he had taken for an angel of light. He had been worsted by a creature absurdly weaker than himself, and his whole being smarted, because his whole being still cried aloud for that weaker creature. He wanted her ! He wanted her !

He suffered as only the strong suffer ; his passions reacted upon him as only very strong passions may react. He felt his inflexible will in collision with circumstances which opposed, baffled, and betrayed him, and against

which he had no redress. He was like one battering his head against a stone wall.

One hot Sunday morning in that July, as they were returning from Church immediately after the communion, he met Sophy face to face. Sweet, cool, all in white, she was like water to a parched mouth, like light made visible to blind eyes. His heart beat thickly, little darting flames danced through his veins. Sophy ! She had been unfaithful to him, she had betrayed him, she was lost to him. None the less she was Sophy. Had he been less intent upon himself, he must have seen the young wife's condition. If he saw it at all, he ignored it, or saw it only as an added injury, a last unpardonable crime against himself. Sophy was to become a mother—and Sophy's baby would not call *him* father !

He stopped, directly in her path, and spoke ; and she, perforce must stop, too.

“ Mrs. Williamson,” said he, white-lipped and intense, “ have you any reason to believe that from the first day I saw you until this hour, I have ever dissembled with you ? ”

“ Indeed,” said Sophy promptly, “ I don't believe you ever have. But,” she finished sorrowfully, “ you seem to think I have dissembled with you.”

“ I do think so. I know so.” And without warning he began to pour out recriminations and reproaches, a burning flood pouring lavalike from his hurt and angry heart. All that the Brownfields had told him ; all that everybody else had said or hinted against her ; all that his own jealousy suspected and imagined, Sophy heard from John Wesley's lips.

It was a very hot morning—the July sun was approaching noon. A white heat-haze wavered up from the sandy sidewalks, the air scorched as it touched one ; hardly ■

breath stirred the languid, drooping foliage. The gardens lay shrivelling in the fierce sun. It was stickily uncomfortable to walk abroad, even on the shady side of the street, and left one tired and spent, and wilted. Sophy felt the strain of the torrid weather—she was nervous, and her head ached, for all she looked so cool in her white frock. She stood as though rooted to the ground, staring at John Wesley. Cruel and rancorous charges and complaints. Bitter looks. Not one word of mercy, not one single doubt of her whole and complete guilt! Every thing he had ever heard or imagined against her. Every little circumstance that could be twisted and misunderstood, every idle word that could be oddly coloured. His own unjust accusations, made a thousand times more bitter by the testimony of others.

She looked at him with a sort of horrid astonishment. She felt, for the moment, so bewildered as to be all but stunned. Then a physical sickness made her tremble. The heat-waves, the sandy street, the languid trees, the hot sunshine, all wavered before her eyes. Something very cruel and unbelievable was happening. That raging fury, saying terrible things to her, couldn't be John Wesley, the soft-voiced gentleman who had been so passionately fond of her, the holy lover who had so often reiterated his undying faith and affection.

She wished to cry aloud, to beg him to let her explain ; she wished to deny, to make him understand. But a glance at that dead-white face, those glittering eyes, those thin lips pinched together so mercilessly, made her recoil. It was not so much that he had changed, in the twinkling of an eye, as that he had become intensified in all that was worst in him ; that he was, as it were, Jealousy made visible, slavering green venom.

Denial, pleading died upon her lips. Anything that

she might say in her own defence would be but wasted breath. He was implacable because he loved her and because he was a priest. It came to her with a shock of horror, that because he had loved her he wished now to believe her guilty.

“ False . . . unworthy . . . dissembling . . . from the first ! ” he was saying. “ Acting a lie . . . and I believing in you all the while . . . your dupe . . . ”

“ No ! ” she found her voice then. “ No, no, no ! I never deceived you. But you—but you—you told me——”

He laughed shrilly ; his face went, if that could be, a shade whiter.

“ I told you that I loved you ? Why, so I did ! ”

“ So you did. But never came forward to claim me, in my hour of trial ! ” cried Sophy. “ Told me that you loved me ? Yes ! Often and often and often ! And never went to my uncle, nor asked for me openly, but left me open to gossip and to wonder and slander ! Your love for me was but a poor, poor thing, Mr. Wesley ! Ah ! I see how right William and my aunt have been : you are capable of loving none but yourself ! ”

“ If my love were ten thousand times a poorer thing than you say it was, you would still be unworthy of it : for you were ever false to me,” he grated. “ You are even false to yourself ! ” The flaming eyes, the gesture of the outspread hands, as it were pushed her away, repulsed her as unworthy.

At that, for the first time since he had known her, Sophy turned upon him with a sort of blazing anger and indignation. In her breast had kindled the slow wrath of the meek, the very gentle, an anger hard to arouse and harder to appease. . . . She drew herself up, and seemed to tower above him, and a flush mounted to her forehead.

They looked at each other unpardoningly, the man like an unsheathed rapier, the woman tall and majestic. Her anger was all the deadlier in that she said nothing, gave him no further answer. With her head high, and her eyes blazing, Sophy turned upon her heel and left him.

Trembling, almost intoxicated with pent-up emotion, Wesley rushed to his friend John Burnside, and poured out his side of "the case" as he had come to call it.

"What do you think I ought to do now?" he asked, walking up and down the room.

Burnside was completely under the spell of the stronger man's personality, as was his wife. Both had been converted by him and they could see only through his eyes. Sophy had been their friend; she had loved them tenderly; it was because she had gone with them to Purysburg to be Mrs. Burnside's bridesmaid, that she was now Williamson's wife. But Burnside, forgetting this, listened breathlessly to every word his pastor said—he could never help feeling flattered by Wesley's confidence and friendship. He was good and kind, but not very intelligent. Instead of telling the overexcited minister to go home and tie up his head in wet towels to cool his brain, instead of urging him to take some simple purge for his bile, Burnside gave him the very bad advice he had come to receive, the only advice to which he would have been willing to listen, since it was exactly what he intended to do.

"The case as you have stated it," said Burnside judicially, "seems to me quite clear. Sir, while things appear to you as they do now, you cannot administer holy communion to Mrs. Williamson."

"That is my confirmed opinion, Mr. Burnside!"

"The consequences of rejecting her you know. But be they what they will, that does not alter your duty."

Wesley drank those words as one dying of thirst might gulp down water. He had heard exactly what he most wished to hear. Somebody else thought him right; somebody else saw the situation as he wished it to be seen. But if angels, principalities, powers, thrones, dominions, seraphim and cherubim had said or seen or hinted otherwise, John Wesley, in the state he was then, would have rejected them all as lying spirits, false voices, evil counsellors trying to turn him aside from his plain duty: which was to punish Sophy. He had to punish Sophy. God Almighty meant him to punish Sophy. John Wesley meant John Wesley to punish Sophy.

“I am determined to do what I judge my duty, but with all the mildness God shall give me,” he explained, after some further talk.

Still bent upon the matter which engrossed all his faculties, he went once more to Mr. Causton’s.

“I am here to give Mrs. Williamson another opportunity either of clearing herself, or of owning her fault,” he explained.

But Sophy refused to see him. Merely sent the message that she had nothing at all to say.

He appeared to digest this with so ill a grace that Mrs. Causton, watching him somewhat apprehensively, was suddenly afraid for her niece.

“Please, Mr. Wesley, walk with me in the garden for a few minutes,” she exclaimed, and seizing his arm, led him outside. She began at once to talk vehemently of Sophy’s innocence.

“Oh, I am so sorry for what happened yesterday, that you should so accuse her, and she should be so angered and upset!” she exclaimed, herself thoroughly upset, as she knew she had good cause to be. For what had passed had made the young wife physically ill.

“ Can’t you write to her and tell her plainly just what it is you dislike ? ” begged the woman.

He said, after a pause : “ Yes, I will do that.” And took his leave, having gained nothing by his visit, but an added wretchedness to himself and the woman he was persecuting.

Trembling, in a sort of nervous frenzy, to which the excessive heat added its weight, he rushed home and wrote Mr. Causton :

“ SIR,

“ To this hour you have shown yourself my friend ; I ever have and ever shall acknowledge it. And it is my earnest desire that He who hath hitherto given me this blessing would continue it still.

“ But this cannot be unless you will allow me one request, which is not so easy an one as it appears. *Do not condemn me for doing in the execution of my office what I think it my duty to do.*

“ If you can prevail upon yourself to allow me this, even when I act without respect of persons, I am persuaded there will never be, at least not long, any misunderstanding between us. For even those who seek it, shall, I trust, find no occasion against me, except it be concerning the law of my God.

“ July 5, 1737.”

An hour or so after sending this extraordinary communication to her uncle, he sent the following epistle to Sophy Williamson, “ which I writ in the most mild and friendly manner I could, both in pursuance of my resolution to proceed with all mildness, and because Mrs. Williamson was so much grieved already.”

“ If the sincerity of friendship is best to be known from the painful offices ” [wrote Mr. Wesley], “ then there could not be a stronger proof of mine than that I gave you on Sunday ; except that I am going to give you now, and which you may perhaps equally misinterpret.

“ Would you know what I dislike in your past or present behaviour ? You have always heard my thoughts as freely as you asked them. Nay, much more freely ; you know it well, and so you shall do, as long as I can write or speak.

“ In your present behaviour, I dislike : (1) your neglect of half the public service, which no man living can compell you to ; (2) your neglect of fasting, which you once knew to be a help to the mind, without any prejudice to the body ; and your neglect of almost half the opportunity of communicating which you have lately had.

“ But these things are small in comparison of what I dislike in your past behaviour. For, (1) you told me, over and over, you had certainly conquered your inclination for Mr. Mellichamp. Yet at that very time you had not conquered it. (2) You told me frequently, you had no design to marry Mr. Williamson. Yet at the very time you spoke you had the design. (3) In order to conceal both these things from me, you went through a course of deliberate dissimulation. Oh, how fallen ! How changed ! Surely there was a time when in Miss Sophy’s life there was no guile.

“ Own these facts, and own your fault, and you will be in my thoughts as if they had never been. If you are otherwise minded, I shall still be your friend, though I cannot expect you should be mine.

“ To Mrs. Williamson. July 5.”

This was his case against her ; having stated it in

writing, Mr. Wesley went and talked some more with Mr. Brownfield, Mrs. Burnside, and the Germans, about Miss Sophy. Then he called it a day, said his agitated prayers, and went to bed.

Bright and early the next morning Mr. Causton appeared at the parsonage, fetching with him Mr. Parker, one of the chief bailiffs, and Mr. Recorder Christie. He complained, with some heat, that he had received a letter from Mr. Wesley which to save his soul he couldn't understand.

“How could you think I'd oppose you in executing any part of your office?” he wanted to know. “What's the matter with you?”

“Sir,” said the clergyman, “what if I should think it my duty, the duty of my holy office, to repel one of your family from the Holy Communion?”

Unaware of any heinousness on the part of any member of his family, the magistrate rather took it for granted that Mr. Wesley was putting a hypothetical case to him, in regard to the odd letter which made such large demands, and explained so little. He remembered, too, Oglethorpe's request to him not to quarrel with John Wesley, and he managed to reply, with a certain good humour :

“Well, Mr. Wesley, if you repel me or Mrs. Causton, I shall have to require a legal reason. But I'll trouble myself with none else. Let them look out for themselves.”

The magistrate wondered what else Wesley expected him to say? He was responsible only for his own wife, and for no one else's. Having made this plain, and wishing to avoid further conversation, he nodded to Christie and Parker, and the three bowed themselves out. They were all more than a little weary of their pastor's exactions. . . . Parker grumbled that nobody knew just

what Mr. Wesley wanted, or why he wanted it, but one thing everybody did know—whatever he wanted, it meant trouble !

“ Why, he wanted Miss Sophy. There be trouble for 'ee,” said Christie broadly. “ 'Tis what all the town's saying, so 'tis ! ”

That the town was gossiping about him, Mr. Wesley ignored. He worked like a galley slave. And so that momentous July passed. He was glad to get away from Savannah, when Spangenberg came back, and pay his long-intended visit to the Germans at Ebenezer. Here he thought he breathed clearer air. He admired that town which was like a petrified Sunday.

“ I hope,” he confided to Spangenberg, “ you will shortly see that I am not, as some accuse me of being, a respecter of persons. I am determined, God being my helper, henceforth to behave indifferently to all, rich or poor, friends or enemies.”

He said no more, and Spangenberg didn't press him for particulars. So he came back to Savannah, and gave Causton an account of his journey. And all the time he prepared himself, like a martyr, to meet the ordeal ahead of him, to do what his inflexible will had determined, even though the sky should fall. He went over the exact course of procedure, studied his part, so to say, until he was letter-perfect. On the following Sunday, before the staring eyes of all Savannah, when Sophy Williamson approached the Communion Table, John Wesley repulsed her.

CHAPTER XX

“ VENGEANCE IS MINE ! ”

“ I REPELLED Mrs. Williamson from the Communion Table for the reasons set forth in my letter of July fifth to her, as well as for not giving me notice of her design to communicate after having intermitted it for some time. I foresaw the consequences well, but I remembered the promise in the Epistle for the day : ‘ *God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able ; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it,* ’ ” explained Mr. Wesley blandly, to himself and others. For his had not been a hasty action, but one long premeditated.

He had, like many another, set the seal of duty to the Lord upon an act of self-will. He had been as autocratic, ungenerous, and unjust as only the godly can be in such crises. He had done exactly what he wished to do—punished and humiliated a woman who had married another man ; and he did it in the name of duty and God.

That Sunday evening Sophy expressed her anger and indignation at the treatment she had met that morning, to her friends the Burnside.

“ Before everybody ! ” she wept. “ It was cruel, it was horrible of him ! Oh, I never thought he of all men could be guilty of something so outrageous ! To me, to me ! ”

“ You was much to blame, after receiving that letter from Mr. Wesley, to offer yourself at the Table before

you had cleared yourself to him," said Mrs. Burnside, rather lamely.

"Would it enter your head, when you knew you had done nothing to merit such treatment that a minister would drive you away from the Table as if you were the vilest of the vile?" Sophy asked that, over and over.

"You know what cause of discontent lies between you," the Burnsides told her.

"Yes, I do know!" cried Sophy. "And I tell you, this isn't religion—it's spite! What business is it of his whether or not I once had some inclination to Tommy Mellichamp? That's William's affair, not his! No, you can't say anything for him: this is nothing now but his spite and hatred for me, that's all it is!" Again she wept.

"You may easily put an end to this by going to Mr. Wesley now, and clearing yourself of what you are charged with," said Mrs. Burnside.

"No. I never did anything to deserve such treatment at his hands. I'll never demean myself, never go near him again as long as I live. I have done with him. I shan't show so mean a spirit as to speak to him myself about this; but somebody else shall!"

They who had been such friends parted coldly enough, as the Burnsides told Wesley.

That night all Savannah was talking, and before morning all Savannah, and presently the whole Province, had divided into two hostile camps, the larger and more important of which was solidly against the rector of Christ Church Parish. He had committed a wrong and mean act, moved, most people said, not by any sense of duty, but by personal aggrievement. That one wrong act had in a day forever ruined his usefulness in Georgia, and lost him whatever influence he had gained. Worse yet, it

solidified the sentiment against him and that for which he stood, and strengthened the hands of his enemies ; he had unwittingly helped the evil forces in the colony, which were quick to take advantage of the opportunity. Even his friends, such as remained to him, were powerless now to help him. The confusion Charles brought about in Frederica was a feeble spark to the conflagration John started in Savannah.

Mr. Causton hadn't expected it, and was forced to take action. Early Monday morning the Recorder issued the following warrant :

“ GEORGIA, Savannah, Ss.

“ To all Constables, Tithingmen, and others whom these may concern : You, and each of you, are hereby required to take the body of John Wesley, Clerk :

“ And bring him before one of the bailiffs of the said town, to answer the complaint of William Williamson and Sophia his wife, for defaming the said Sophia, and refusing to administer to her the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, in a public congregation, without cause ; by which the said William Williamson is damaged one thousand pounds sterling :

“ And for so doing, this is your warrant, certifying what you are to do in the premises. Given under my hand and seal the 8th day of August, Anno Dom. 1737.

“ (Signed) THO. CHRISTIE.”

That evening Mr. Wesley joined with the Germans in one of their love-feasts, begun and ended with thanksgiving and prayer, and “ celebrated in so decent and so solemn a manner as a Christian of the apostolic age would have allowed to be worthy of Christ.”

The Germans had always been a sort of sheet-anchor to him. They were more so now than ever.

The situation which confronted him did not catch him unprepared. He had known what would happen if he carried out his intention of repelling Sophy Williamson from the sacrament. Nevertheless he had done so. In the sight of all Savannah—which meant all Georgia—he had humiliated her, who had humiliated him.

His conscience licked its paws before the fire of content. He felt exalted—his punishment of Sophy had fulfilled the law. He had proved, as he had said to Spangenberg, that he was no respecter of persons. He had always prayed to do the will of God. Confusing the will of God with his own will, he couldn't see himself in the rôle of the self-appointed harsh judge, the disappointed lover. Rather he saw himself as the Christian pastor doing his duty, nobly, unselfishly, refusing even her whom he had loved the Bread of Life, because she was unworthy to partake of it.

The home-made robe of martyrdom is by no means uncomfortable in rough weather. Wesley wrapped it around his shoulders now and it kept him snug ; it kept warm his sense of righteous superiority. The man was so vital, so dominant, that, while he stimulated Savannah to an almost ecstatic anger, he stimulated himself to join battle with them in the name of the Lord and John Wesley.

The gauge he threw in their teeth was immediately picked up and thrown back in his own. On Tuesday he was apprehended, and carried before Mr. Bailiff Parker and Mr. Recorder Christie. Mr. Bailiff Parker, a gentleman whose native intelligence had never been warped or biassed by any form of education whatever, and whose nature was always kept warm by liberal supplies of that good rum which the trouble-making Mr. Wesley tried so hard to keep out of the colony, earned his daily bread, when he was not gracing office or too drunk, as a wood-

sawyer. Mr. Recorder Christie was rather more burdened with book learning. Before these two Savannah lights appeared the Fellow of Lincoln, Mr. John Wesley, M.A.

To the charge that he had defamed Sophia Williamson, he entered a flat denial. To the charge that he had repelled her from the Table without cause, he said, composedly, that as this was a purely ecclesiastical matter he must question their power to interrogate him.

After considering this for some moments, Mr. Bailiff Parker said gravely :

“Howsomever, Mr. Wesley, you must appear at the next Court holden in Savannah.”

“Gentlemen,” cried Mr. Williamson, “I desire that Mr. Wesley give bail for his appearance.”

Mr. Bailiff Parker, who had no education, but who had at least a little common sense, demurred :

“Sir,” says he to Williamson, “Mr. Wesley’s word is sufficient.”

For after all, Mr. Wesley was a scholar and a gentleman, and a clergyman of the Established Church, and Parker wasn’t anything but a tipsy sawyer, who should have been pulling his forelock to his Reverence.

Williamson was furious. His public reply was to set up an advertisement in the Great Square of Savannah, forbidding any person or persons to take John Wesley out of the Province of Georgia, under penalty of one thousand pounds sterling, Mr. Wesley being “guilty of divers notorious offences.”

All Savannah thronged to look at it and read it, those who couldn’t read hearing it from the lips of those who could. “Di-vers no-to-ri-ous of-fen-ces !” repeated the populace, and smacked its lips. “Eh, sirs !”

“From a just regard to the friendship that has subsisted between us till now, will you meet me at the Court

House this afternoon at four o'clock, and before all the people give your reasons for rejecting my niece from the sacrament ? " Causton asked the clergyman, reasonably enough.

" No," said Wesley promptly. " All the people are not proper judges of ecclesiastical matters. Besides," he finished, " I am unwilling to expose her. Again, I fear that Mr. Causton might be insulted by the people ! " He had a feeling heart for the Causton family.

Then he sent the magistrate a note, stating delicately that the writer feared many ill consequences would arise should he do as Mr. Causton requested, and that he preferred to let the cause be laid before the Trustees.

Causton choked wrathfully over the note. The Trustees, he said, had never seen Sophy, and could therefore judge ecclesiastically, he supposed. As everybody in Savannah knew her, of course they weren't proper judges !

Toltschig, although he never could understand why dear Brother Wesley hadn't married Sophy when he had the chance, still remained friendly ; Spangenberg came quietly forward and stood by his fellow labourer ; and the Burnside, though they themselves had had occasion to complain of their pastor's highhandedness, and had in a way been responsible for the hasty Williamson marriage, now sided openly with their pastor, breaking all their pleasant intercourse with the Caustons. It was a blow to Sophy.

When he found that he couldn't arrive at any satisfactory settlement, Mr. Causton came again to the parsonage, thoroughly angry and perturbed. " His language was rougher than before," which struck Wesley as being strange, and sinful. The magistrate shouted :

" Make an end of this matter ! Thou hadst best !

My niece to be used thus ! ” And he added, brandishing his fists :

“ I have drawn the sword—and I will never sheathe it till I have satisfaction ! ”

Mr. Wesley replied Christianly.

“ At least give us the reasons for rejecting her before the whole congregation,” insisted Causton, who, as a man of affairs, with a working knowledge of the common law, must have understood that the charges in the letter were too flimsy to hold water. He reflected that there was something more behind this personal animus.

“ Sir,” said Mr. Wesley sedately, “ if you insist upon it, I will. And so you may tell her.”

“ Write to her and tell her so yourself ! ” barked the badgered magistrate.

“ I will,” said the parson, coolly. And the angry Mr. Causton having flounced out, the clergyman, with a sort of unhappy joy, sat down to write once more to Sophy.

“ To Mrs. Sophia Williamson :

“ At Mr. Causton’s request I write once more. The rules whereby I proceed are these :

“ —So many as intend to be partakers of the Holy Communion, shall signify their names to the Curate, at least some time the day before. This you did not do.

“ —And if any of these . . . have done any wrong to his neighbours, by word or deed, so that the congregation be thereby offended, the Curate . . . shall advertise him, that in any wise he presume not to come to the Lord’s Table, until he hath openly declared himself to have truly repented.

“ If you offer yourself at the Lord’s Table on Sunday, I will advertise you, as I have done more than once, wherein you have done wrong. And when you have openly de-

clared yourself to have truly repented, I will administer to you the mysteries of my God.

“August 11, 1737.

JOHN WESLEY.”

One of the mysteries of God must be the state of mind of the man who wrote that letter. He had admitted her to the Table, time and time again, and no one in the congregation had ever expressed the faintest breath of being offended. She had never offended anybody but himself, and the whole animus was his. Admitting the most notorious sinner on earth to the Lord’s Table—as Jesus himself had admitted the Magdalene—would not have offended any congregation so bitterly as John Wesley’s repelling of the girl whose one sin was that she had married somebody else, offended the people of Christ Church Parish.

Delamotte, carrying the letter to the Causton house, was told by Mr. Causton hotly :

“I am the person that is most injured ! This affront is offered to me, and I will espouse the cause of my niece ! I tell ye I’ll have satisfaction for this, if ’tis to be had in this world !”

The magistrate was a carnal-minded man. He didn’t understand the mysteries of God as Mr. Wesley understood them, and he gave way to what other earthly-minded men would consider a just enough anger. Mr. Wesley, wondering how Mr. Causton was going to get the satisfaction he clamoured for, took comfort and assurance from the words of the evening lesson :

“I will never leave thee, not forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper. I will not fear what man shall do unto me.”

Causton’s first satisfaction was cruel and insidious, and made Mr. Wesley feel as if he had fallen into an ants’

nest : the magistrate called in his friends and neighbours, and read aloud to all who wished to listen, Mr. John Wesley's letters to him and also to Sophy, from the beginning of their acquaintance.

It was very interesting reading. The fame of it spread. People laughed. Mr. Wesley complained, bitterly, that Mr. Causton had been at great pains to injure him, “ selecting such parts of each letter as might bear an ill construction, and inserting here and there a few words to make things more clear to the apprehension of his hearers.” As a come-back, the parson read his side of the matter aloud in church to the entire congregation. Savannah was properly scandalized.

But every member of the Causton family, and all their friends and acquaintances, met every accusation against Sophy with derisive smiles :

“ That ? Good heavens ! It isn't possible you pay any attention to the parson ? My dear, the man acts thus out of pure revenge—because Sophy wouldn't have him ! ”

If that wasn't enough, they laughed, and quoted passages from his letters. There was enough truth in all this to sting to the bone.

Delamotte, who had tried to keep Wesley from the disastrous course he had followed, refrained from saying “ I told you so,” but he knew to his cost the general opinion. As he had heartily wished for the Williamson marriage, he had no further animosity against Sophy. Neither could the robe of martyr, which comforted Wesley, fit Delamotte. He was having a very bad time altogether. He didn't know how this thing was going to end, and he was afraid, not for himself, but for Wesley. All he could do was to stand by, and pray.

Wesley was finding how steadily the tide was turning against him. In talking the matter over with one who

had known the whole story from the beginning, he discovered to his chagrin that a few talks with Mr. Causton—perhaps a few paragraphs from those letters—had convinced even such a friend that he, Wesley, was wholly in the wrong. Whatever fault there had been was his. He had behaved badly to Sophy.

Wesley had little to say for himself.

“It is useless for me to protest my innocence,” he told Delamotte, when they talked the matter over. “Perhaps the time is not yet come. Indeed I doubt whether it might be the will of God, insomuch that He may see it to be best for me that I should be condemned and despised of all men.”

This comforted him. The daily lessons helped him, too, as in Frederica they had helped Charles. It is profoundly consoling to find a supporter in Scripture.

CHAPTER XXI

THE END OF JOHN WESLEY'S LOVE LIFE

NOTHING else was talked about in Savannah but the Wesley trial. Absurd as were the charges and counter-charges, ridiculous as was this tempest in a teapot, the recriminations and bitterness inspired by it were very real. No one was neutral. Every one who had a grievance against the minister sided with the Caustons ; every one who had a grudge against the Caustons and the Williams-sons sided with the minister. John Wesley had set the whole Province quarrelling.

In answer to their summons he had appeared before a Grand Jury " who were well prepared for their work, either by previous applications from Mr. Causton, or by avowed enmity to me or the Church of England. One was a Frenchman who did not understand English, one a Papist, one a professed infidel, three Baptists, sixteen or seventeen, other Dissenters ; and several who had personal quarrels against me, and had openly avowed revenge."

John Wesley listened in silence when Sophy's deposition was read to this jury.

" May I have a copy of that paper ? " he asked.

" You can get it from the newspapers—it will be published in them all," Mr. Causton promised ominously.

But John Burnside copied it for Wesley, who inserted it among his private papers. It was a painful shock to him. Knowing Sophy, he was sure that Causton and

Williamson had written it, and that she had signed it at their instigation. The affidavit read :

“ Province of Georgia, Savannah, Ss.”

“ Sophia Christina Williamson, the wife of William Williamson, of Savannah aforesaid, maketh oath, that about twelve months since she was committed to the care of Mr. John Wesley, the missionary residing in this Province, by her relations, which care the said John Wesley discharged with a great deal of seeming fidelity for two or three months. And this Deponent further saith that, after the said three months, the said John Wesley began to use his endeavours to alienate the affections of the said Deponent from her relations ; and often in very pathetic terms urged to her the necessity of her forsaking them and leaving their house in order to cohabit with him, alleging that the said John Wesley would maintain her, and basely insinuating that she never could make so good a progress to salvation while she lived with them as she could if she lived wholly with him.

“ And this Deponent further saith that the said John Wesley, finding all the aforesaid arguments and persuasions ineffectual, he, the said John Wesley, frequently made several overtures of marriage to the Deponent, without acquainting her relations thereof, as they have informed this Deponent. And the better to induce this Deponent thereto, he, the said John Wesley, often alleged that he could easily alter anything in his way of life that was disagreeable to her ; though he, the said John Wesley, had always prescribed to this Deponent the same way of life he then led as the only means of obtaining salvation ; to corroborate which he always added that he endeavoured to imitate the primitive fathers, who were strict imitators of the life of Christ.

“ And this Deponent further saith that the said John Wesley further added that whereas he had no settled habitation, and in this regard Deponent might not like his present wandering way of life, he would procure to himself the settlement of Savannah ; and used other arguments which this Deponent cannot at present recollect, whereby he gave this Deponent to understand that he would lay aside his former intentions of going among the Indians, in case this Deponent would approve of him for a husband.

“ And this Deponent further saith that about three days before her marriage with the said William Williamson, the said John Wesley came to this Deponent and urged very much to know whether this Deponent had not been overpersuaded or forced to agree to the said marriage, and whether it might not still be prevented. Adding again that if there was anything in his way of life—by which he gave this Deponent to understand he meant fasting and the other severe mortifications which he, the said John Wesley, and she, this Deponent, by his instruction, had then strictly practiced for about six months—which she, the said Deponent, had any dislike to, he, the said John Wesley, would make all these things easy to her, in case she would consent to marry him.

“ And this Deponent further saith that ever since her marriage with the said William Williamson, he, the said John Wesley, hath taken all opportunities, in her husband's absence, to persecute this Deponent and to force his private discourse to her, wherein he hath often terrified her with the danger her soul would be in if she did not continue to spend her time and converse with him, the said John Wesley, in the same manner she did before marriage.

“ And this Deponent further saith that particularly about three months since the said John Wesley being at this

Deponent's house among other company who were then busy with this Deponent's uncle, he, the said John Wesley, took an opportunity to follow this Deponent to the back door, and there told this Deponent that it was necessary for the benefit of her soul that he should still continue to converse with her ; that she must not mind what the world said on such an occasion ; and that she must contrive some opportunity or proper times for him to converse with her. To which this Deponent answered, She wondered he could desire any such thing, when he knew this Deponent's husband had so often forbidden him, and she had so often refused him so to do.

“ (Signed) SOPHIA CHRISTIANA WILLIAMSON.”

“ Sworn before me this 16th day of August, 1737.”

“ (Signed) HENRY PARKER.”

“(Transcribed from the copy taken and attested by Mr. Burnside.)”

After this Deposition had been gravely read and considered, the Court delivered to the Grand Jury “ A list of Grievances Presented by the Grand Jury for Savannah, this (16th) day of August, 1737.”

“ That, whereas the Colony of Georgia is composed of a mixed number of Christians, members of the Church of England and Dissenters, who all or most part would attend divine ordinances and communicate with a faithful pastor of the Established Church : the Rev. Mr. John Wesley, who for the present serves the cure of Savannah, had not as the law directs emitted any declaration in this place of his adherence to the principles of the Church of England. We have the more reason to complain of grievances, that the said Revd. person (as we humbly

conceive) deviates from the principles and regulations of the Established Church, in many particulars inconsistent with the happiness and prosperity of this Colony."

The list of grievances that followed included everything from Baptism to Burials. He had done this, he had not done that. He had introduced novelties—even then an almost capital offence in Savannah.

He administered the Lord's Supper to boys, ignorant and unqualified, against their parents' protests; he wouldn't administer it to "well-disposed" persons, unless they would confess, and do penances for, crimes "whereof no evidence is offered." He "vented sundry uncharitable expressions against all who differed from him." He made trouble, particularly, by teaching wives and servants that they ought absolutely to follow the course of mortification, fastings, and diets of prayers prescribed by him, without any regard to the interest of their private families, or the commands of their respective husbands and masters. He had made trouble "by searching into and meddling with the affairs of private families, by means of servants and spies employed by him for that purpose, whereby the peace both of public and private life is much endangered."

So did the Grand Jury, sitting in Savannah, "with all respect and deference to the person and character of the Revd. Mr. John Wesley, present these . . . grievances; not from any resentment, but . . . in the interests of peace and religion of this Province."

Uproar ensued upon the reading of this Presentment, and finally it was decided to lay it aside, "because of the extreme uncouthness of the whole."

When the Caustons were heard, Sophy herself declared that she had had no objection to Mr. Wesley's behaviour

prior to her marriage. Mr. Causton admitted bluntly that he wouldn't have said No if Mr. Wesley had ever asked him outright for his niece's hand, and Mrs. Causton said truthfully that it had been at her instigation that he had written his letter of July fifth to Sophy, the shock of which, some said, had occasioned the young wife's miscarriage.

The whole matter now wore the ugly aspect of a rancorous quarrel, in which, though the Church was dragged in by the hair, neither side showed any sign of the Christian spirit. The Causton side seemed to be getting the better of it.

"It was now therefore time for God to arise and to take the wise in their own craftiness. And that His Hand might be the more remarkably visible therein, He chose Mr. Causton himself for His instrument; who being informed that the Jury were falling on other matters beyond his instructions, went to them, and behaved in such a manner that in one-quarter of an hour he turned two-and-forty of the forty-four into a fixed resolution to inquire into his whole conduct. They entered directly upon the examinations of witnesses on that head, and continued to do so all Friday. On Saturday Mr. Causton, finding all his arts ineffectual and that they were resolved to go through with their work, adjourned the Court until Thursday, September first, following, and spared no pains to bring them in the meantime to another mind. But the jurors he had added for my sake gave such spirit to the rest that all his labour was in vain."

So John went back home and walked in his garden, and made and sang verses to the glory of the Lord, and calling his friends and allies around him, read them every least detail of "the Case."

Although the Hand of the Lord was so plainly visible

in dealing with Mr. Causton that all his arts were in vain with that job lot of jurors, "thus far he prevailed" that on Thursday, September first, this same Grand Jury delivered two Presentments into Court, containing ten indictments against "the said Mr. John Wesley."

In the first they found that he "had forced his conversation upon Sophia Williamson against the express desire of William, her husband; that he had written and privately conveyed papers to her; that he had refused her the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, to the great disgrace and hurt of her character; and that in so doing he had assumed an authority "contrary to the laws established, and to the peace of our Lord the King, his crown and dignity."

The second Presentation noted among other charges, that "Mr. John Wesley had not since his arrival in Savannah emitted any Public Declaration of his adherence to the Principles and Regulations of the Church of England, that he had changed the Order of Morning Prayer from nine to eleven o'clock to five or six o'clock; that he had refused to baptize otherwise than by dipping the child of one Henry Parker, adding to his refusal that unless its parents would consent to have their child so dipped, it could die a heathen. That he had refused the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper to William Gough when he heard that William was a Dissenter. That he had refused to read the Office of the Burial of the Dead over the body of Nathanael Polhill because he had not been of John Wesley's opinion, so that Nathanael Polhill was interred without benefit of clergy."

In addition, "That Mr. John Wesley had presumptuously called himself Ordinary, assuming thereby an authority which did not belong to him; that he had, in Whitsun week last, refused William Aglionby to stand

Godfather to the child of Henry Manley, giving no other reason than that William Aglionby had not been at the Communion Table ; that he had baptized the child of Thomas Jones, having only one Godmother ; all of which was contrary to the peace of our Sovereign Lord the King, his crown and dignity."

When the Court sat again a few days later, " the said Mr. John Wesley " very politely explained to them that since nine out of the ten indictments were of a purely ecclesiastical nature, and since they themselves were not an Ecclesiastical Court, they could not, naturally, take cognizance of them. But as the indictment charging him with speaking and writing to Mrs. Williamson was a secular matter, he desired to be tried for that, now and here where the facts were committed.

Cornered, they made evasive replies. That same afternoon he again appeared and petitioned the Court for an immediate trial at Savannah, where those who were offended might clearly see whether he had really done wrong to any one, or whether he did not rather deserve the thanks of [Mrs. Williamson and the Causton family.

Mr. Bailiff Parker, that unlettered wood-sawyer, and the heterodox Jury of one infidel, one Papist, three Baptists, and a baker's dozen of other Dissenters, not to mention several personal enemies thirsting for revenge upon Mr. Wesley, had absolutely no chance in any argument with him. They had caught him, and now they didn't know what to do with him. They had found ten indictments against him, and they didn't know what to reply to his answers, or how to proceed on his plain demand.

Oglethorpe was in England. The Grand Jury scratched their heads worriedly. What was to be said to Oglethorpe—and to the Trustees—if they really took

action against John Wesley? And what action could they take? What were they going to do, anyhow?

Mr. Wesley in the meantime went on with his work, snatching what moments of relaxation and peace he could. Although he was seized and much weakened by a violent flux, so that he could hardly walk to church, yet he forced himself to do so and was able to conduct the full service. In a couple of days he could write, "It pleased God to restore me to perfect health."

One afternoon when Wesley happened to be making a parochial call, Mr. Dison happened to visit the same house. Dison had been the very complaisant chaplain of a company of soldiers at Frederica, and had been disliked and distrusted by Charles Wesley, who refused to meet him. In a loud voice Mr. Dison now announced that he had received authority from the magistrates to perform ecclesiastical offices in Savannah, and should begin to do so the next day, by reading prayers, preaching, and administering the sacrament.

John Wesley made him no answer. He himself had received his appointment from the Trustees. Oglethorpe was in England. The magistrates, of course, had no authority, earthly or divine, to appoint any minister in his place, and Mr. Wesley knew it. He immediately sent a notice "To the Magistrates of the Town of Savannah."

"If you are not apprised that Mr. Dison intends this day publickly to perform several ecclesiastical offices in Savannah, and, as he says, by your authority, I do now apprise you thereof, and am, Gentlemen, your humble servant, J.W."

Their humble servant J.W. was more than a match for any and all the magistrates of the Town of Savannah.

"You must yourself go to England to prevent or remove the misrepresentations the Williamsonsons will be

sure to spread," Delamotte told his friend anxiously. "I have just been informed that they are going in the next ship."

"We will cast lots and let the Lord decide for me."

The two cast lots and received two answers, one interpreted as a personal caution, the other as foretelling the event of things.

"He went out and found one of his fellow servants which owed him an hundred pence. And he caught him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest."

"Cast out the scorner, and contentions go out, yea, strife and reproach shall cease."

It might have been difficult for anybody but John Wesley to interpret to his own ends this ambiguous Scripture. But he could see what he wished to see and hear what he wished to hear, at times. Fortified thus, he consulted his friends, and they agreeing with him, he laid aside the thought of going to England.

"It is more suitable for me to commit my cause to God, and not to be in haste to justify myself," he explained.

"Besides, some members of the Grand Jury have just let me read the paper they are sending to the Trustees in my favour."

But the dissension was spreading. "It was," wrote Colonel Stephens, the new Recorder, "now Grown to that Height as to engage great part of the Town, which was so divided that Mr. Causton and Mr. Wesley drew their greatest Attention, and the Partisans on both Sides did not Stick to throw Plenty of Scandal against their Adversaries."

Oglethorpe himself came in for a goodly share of the scandal; so much so, that a visitor could write, " 'Tis said that Mr. Oglethorpe is openly living in Adultery with a man's Wife in Frederica." And everybody believed it.

Mr. Wesley added to the uproar by "inadvertently mentioning" the fact that Mr. Causton had desired him to write the Trustees an account of the Scotch at Savannah —one of the Scotch happening to be listening with outstretched ears to Mr. Wesley's remarks.

"Mr. Causton persuaded me," said Mr. Wesley, "to write to the Trustees and acquaint them with the fact that the Scotch in Savannah are universally a turbulent people, who neither regard divine nor human laws, but live idle, and constantly foment mischief!"

The Scotchman left in a hurry, and ran to his countrymen with the pleasing news, "who seemed to resent it highly."

"I said no such thing!" denied Causton wrathfully, when the Scotch came after him with bared fangs. "I deny it flatly! I have always admired the Scotch. It pains me deeply, gentlemen, to have you suspect me of an evil mind toward you, when I have always been your warm friend. In proof of my assertion, I ask you, gentlemen, have I not always lived in accord with the Scotch?"

"'Tis true we have aye lived in peace with ye," said the Scotch, mollified. And they went and told the tale to Mr. Recorder Stephens, asking his advice. He asked sensibly:

"How long since is it that Mr. Causton said this to Mr. Wesley?"

"Something above a year ago."

"It seems to me," said Mr. Recorder, "that Mr. Wesley, who hath kept this smothering so long in his breast, hath brought it forth now maliciously at this juncture, when he and Mr. Causton are fallen out, in order to exasperate the Scotch against him, whom to this time he lived in good accord with." And the Scotch agreed with him.

Stephens went to church the following Sunday, and could find no fault with Wesley's sermon. But he was concerned to see so thin an audience. Almost everybody who was anybody had stayed away.

"I am afraid this proceeds from a grown aversion to the preacher," said the Colonel, shaking his powdered pate. Like the Scotch, he took his perch on the Causton rather than the Wesleyan side of the fence.

Troubled as he was, Wesley could find time to read prayers to the French at Highgate village, near Savannah, in their own tongue ; to preach in German to the German families at Hempstead, another nearby village ; and though he couldn't speak Italian very well, he could speak it well enough to pray for a few homesick Vaudois. He was now praying and preaching in English, French, German, Spanish, and Italian. He was reading in Greek, Latin, and even Hebrew. And he was writing and singing those hymns which the whole Christian world was to sing after him.

Once more he appeared before the Court held during the first week in November. He was accused now of "going around from house to house stirring up the people to mutiny." He was said to be "an enemy and a hinderer of the public peace." It was claimed that "on several occasions Mr. Wesley, and some others, who were closely linked in opposing the Magistrates in the Execution of Justice, used to come into the Court in a menacing Manner, crying out 'Liberty !' calling to the People to remember they were Englishmen, etc., etc., and that Mr. Wesley was generally the principal Speaker to harangue the People, though he had no Sort of Business nor any Call there ; in so much that they had been divers Times apprehensive of being mobb'd and turned off the Bench."

So raged and raved gossip in Savannah, where common

sense was at a very high premium. As soon as they talked of the Wesley-Williamson affair people seemed unable to think sanely. All the "chief men and magistrates" stopped going to church because of "a grown aversion to the preacher." Wesley preached now to a very small congregation, but these were his sworn friends and partisans, by no means meek, mild, or silent. They had a great deal to say in his favour, and they said it at the top of their lungs.

His opponents replied quite as vociferously. Everybody was quarrelling now about everything. All the pent-up dissatisfaction in the colony had come to a head, like a very large and very sore boil, so that to sit down was acutely painful, and to stand overlong horribly hurtful to corns and bunions. Naturally, tempers were chafed raw. The magistrates and jurors quarrelled venomously among themselves ; and this and that case of flagrant injustice was aired and tossed about like fireballs ; from the Governor down, everybody's reputation was frazzled.

Nobody was content with anything. Oglethorpe . . . Causton . . . Wesley. . . . You said . . . I said . . . he, she, we, it, they . . . said, this, that, t'other. For instance, there were no servants to be had. *We need and we must have help, or we can't work the land. Carolina has negroes. We ought to have negroes, like Carolina.* . . . As things stand now, we haven't even surety of the tenure of the land ! Something has simply got to be done about the way things are managed in this Province ! *Oglethorpe . . . Causton . . . Wesley* — Savannah had become a free-for-all.

Causton was sick and tired of the whole affair. It interrupted his work, it brought things to light which he had hoped to keep hidden. And he thought, anxiously, of Oglethorpe's order, "Causton, if you regard my

favour, whatever you do don't quarrel with Mr. Wesley."

Although he was convinced that the quarrel had been forced upon him, the harried magistrate had a very real concern for Oglethorpe's favour, and he wondered if, perhaps, there might not yet be hope of patching up the matter with the pestilent parson. After some sleepless nights the magistrate nerved himself to let Mr. Wesley know that he desired a conference, in which, he further intimated, he had hopes that the misunderstandings between them might be amicably settled.

John Wesley called upon him that very afternoon. The two gentlemen were civil, but although the magistrate was plainly anxious for a reconciliation, offered to come to church again, and so set an example to the town, Wesley was adamantine. To his unbending mind the rupture was beyond mending. Nobody but the Lord God Omnipotent could deal adequately now with the Causton family, root and branch. Wesley might admit, in time to come, that his pastoral discipline may have been mistaken. But beyond that he would not go.

He was, however, as heartily sick of the affair as Causton was. He found himself in an odious position, from which he could neither advance nor retreat without loss. He had appeared before several sittings of the Court, without any satisfaction whatever. He was the butt for fresh slanders and accusations daily, and daily he lost ground. Those who didn't detest him, laughed at him. A lesser man would have broken under the strain.

He was weary. Causton might have a bad character : Sophy—whom he never saw now, but at a distance—might be insurgent ; but whatever his enemies were or did or said, he knew that he himself had come to the end of his tether : he must escape from Savannah if he wished to

survive at all. He must leave Georgia. For as Charles had failed in Frederica, doing more harm than good, John, in a much larger sense, had most lamentably failed in Savannah ; he was so much more a hindrance than a help, that his presence in Savannah jeopardized the peace and stability of the colony. When he consulted his few friends, they agreed with him that the time had come to depart. The sooner he left Georgia, the better for both.

Of the four enthusiasts who had come out with such high hopes, two had already returned to England, not to return. And now the other two, admitting defeat, prepared to follow. They had never helped the Indians on whose account they had come. For all of them, the heathen still raged. Frederica had had to be abandoned to the ministrations of a Scotch Presbyterian, who, though he was otherwise a good enough man, used extempore prayer before a written sermon. Christ Church Parish in Savannah was split into acrid factions which hung upon each other's flanks like wolves.

The spirit of faction and mean jealousies, natural enough in a town founded by so questionable a class as had settled Savannah, had been augmented by Wesley, rather than quelled. Rum was being openly brought in, establishing a precedent from which Georgia was never to depart. And already these colonists, themselves so lately objects of charity, unlettered artisans and insolvent debtors fresh from British jails, were bawling for slaves. It was time for John Wesley to go.

When he had quite made up his mind, Wesley went to Causton and told him curtly that he didn't think it proper for a hinderer of the peace to stay longer, and that he was going to set out for home immediately. As an earnest, he wrote an advertisement to this effect, and set it up in the Great Square. Then he went home and started to

pack up his effects and prepare for the long journey ahead of him.

Mr. William Williamson immediately set up his advertisement alongside Mr. Wesley's.

“Whereas, Mr. John Wesley hath given Publick Notice of his Intention to go soon to England, I, William Williamson, do hereby notify all and sundry that there is a Cause depending in this Court, where I, William Williamson, have brought an Action against the said Mr. John Wesley, for one thousand pounds sterling Damages: Wherefore, if any one shall aid and assist the said John Wesley out of this Province, I, William Williamson, will prosecute such person with the utmost Rigour.”

Wesley paid no attention to this threat. He knew exactly what he meant to do. He was going to set out for Port Royal the noon of Friday, December second. But at about ten that morning the magistrates sent for him.

“You can't go out of the Province because you haven't yet answered the charges against you,” they told him flatly.

Said the parson tartly, “I have appeared at several Courts successively to answer these charges, and I wasn't suffered to answer them, though I asked for it time after time.”

“That might be so, Mr. Wesley. But whether or no, you can't be allowed to leave the Province, unless you give security to answer these allegations at a regular Court.”

“What security?” demanded Wesley.

“Well, we'll have to consult,” said they sedately. “When we've done so, we'll advise you.”

Mr. Wesley cooled his heels and kept his temper for a couple of hours, his journey held up, while they wrangled over the matter among themselves. Presently Mr.

Recorder appeared, and showed him a sort of bond they had drawn up, engaging John Wesley, under a penalty of fifty pounds, to appear at the regular session of a Court to be held at Savannah when he should be summoned. No date was set. While Wesley was reading this document, Mr. Recorder remarked :

“ Mr. Williamson has desired of us that you should give bail to answer his action.”

“ You are using me very ill, and the Trustees, too,” exclaimed Wesley, fixing upon Mr. Recorder a look of cold anger. “ I shall give you neither bond nor bail—You know your business—and I know mine.” And he turned on his heel and left the room, paying no attention to Mr. Recorder’s remonstrances. At the door he said, over his shoulder : “ I am leaving the Province.”

As soon as he reached his desk, he wrote and sent to the magistrates of Savannah a short letter of two lines, unsealed, advising them that some matters of moment required his waiting upon the Trustees, and he wished to know if they had any design to stop him ?

The magistrates replied by posting an order requiring all officers and sentinels to prevent Mr. John Wesley going out of the Province of Georgia, and forbidding any person to aid or assist him in so doing.

Wesley paid about as much attention to this notice as he had to Williamson’s. Maybe he understood that nothing he could do would please the magistrates so much as his leaving the Province. He was their dear little white elephant, and they didn’t know what to do with him. They couldn’t shoot him, or sell him, or give him away, nor yet use an elephant goad. There he was, trumpeting defiance, doing exactly as he pleased, and God knows whose feet or face he would mash flat before he finished ! A sacred white elephant at large ! If he elected now to

return to his own stamping ground, should they say him nay? But . . . there was the Majesty of the Law. They had to make the gesture of upholding the Majesty of the Law! Hence the Notice in the Great Square. It is quite possible that if any citizen of Savanah had taken that Notice seriously enough to try to prevent Mr. Wesley's departure, the magistrates would have mobbed him and then kept him in jail for the term of his natural life.

But Wesley had to appear to take the Notice seriously enough to allow him to make the gesture of a prisoner at large. He had to extricate himself from a disagreeable situation without appearing ridiculous. The time had come when Mr. Wesley must fly for his life and honour! Thus he, too, saved his face.

He had one short afternoon in which to say farewell to the few friends left him; to look for the last time on his beloved garden, the scene of so much happiness and misery, so much hope and despair. It was in early December, a soft, grey day, sweet with the fragrance of pines. Cassena bushes were a blaze of scarlet berries, hollies wore their darker red, some hardy winter roses showed opening buds, and over in his vegetable garden winter cabbages held up hard, dark green heads on tall stalks. The pair of waxwings which had come to the garden in September still dwelt in the cedar tree—the female peeped at him now with her mild eyes. A few last leaves fluttered from the cables of the Virginia creeper.

It seemed to John Wesley that not months, but centuries had gone over his head since he had first come here; he thought that when he was called to the last judgment, the picture of that garden would be found stamped upon his heart. Here had been spent the great moments of his love life, and when he left it, something never to be re-

placed must be left behind. And he thought that, if spirits haunt those places where they have most lived and loved and suffered, his cassocked ghost—and *hers* beside it—must walk the sandy paths of this Savannah garden.

Every moment that he had spent with her came before him, and an anguish too deep for tears, too great for fears or inhibitions, clawed at his heart. *Sophy, Sophy!*—See what they have done to you, you who were my own one love! Lord God, why?

He remembered Frederica. Liveoaks, and palms, and pines, cool green sea-water flashing in the sun. The river shore. A garden in the wilderness, a girl walking between myrtles. *Sophy.*

Those blue, enchanted days, the boat gliding between lovely lonesome shores of palmy sea islands, the bright rivers, the undulating miles of marsh, over which seabirds soared like freedom's self. Nights . . . stars. Exquisite unforgettable odours, drowsy sounds, and a voice singing in the wilderness, and a face of all faces in the firelight . . . a sense of nearness, flooding his heart with rapture . . . *Sophy.* And he had let *Sophy* go. And now . . .

And now he was going, never to return. And going alone. And it came to him that, because he had let *Sophy* go, he would always be alone; the place she had filled in his life would forever remain empty.

He knew exactly what would be said about his departure; he was indeed to read some one of those odd reports later, written by that old gossiping child of this world, Mr. Secretary to the Trustees in Georgia Stephens:

“ Notwithstanding all the Precaution that was taken . . . Mr. Wesley went off . . . and with him Coates a Constable, Gough a Tything-man, and one Campbell a

Barber. This surprised most People (even many of those who wished him best) that he should take such Company with him ; for there scarce could be found Men more obnoxious ; Coates especially was, and had been a long while one of the principal Fomenters of Mischief, a busy Fellow, always taking upon him in Court to be an Advocate and Pleader for any Delinquent ; going from House to House to fill People's Heads with Jealousies, and distinguishing himself for ■ most inveterate opposition to all Rules of Government : All which was evident to myself, as well from what I observed when here formerly, as more especially now since my Arrival : Moreover, he was greatly accountable to the Trust on divers Articles, as well as indebted to many People : And to add to all this, he had never improved one Foot of Land since he came to the Province, or built any Thing more than a very mean Hut. Gough was also a very idle Fellow, pert and impudent in his Behaviour, always (of late) kicking against the Civil Power, and making it his Business to inflame a Sedition : He likewise had little to show of any Improvement, more than setting up the Shell of a House, which he never near finished, though (if I am rightly informed) he had received considerable Favours to enable him : and now went off in many People's Debt, leaving a Wife and Child behind him, who even in this forlorn State scarcely grieve at his Absence, since he used to beat them more than feed them. Campbell was an insignificant loose Fellow, fit for any Leader who would make a Tool of him ; and all the visible Motive at present to be found for his going off, was in so doing to escape his Creditors. As I was always ready and willing, in Conversation or otherwise, to make Allowance for Mr. Wesley's Failings in Policy, and (out of respect to his Function) careful not to run hastily into an entire Belief of all I heard laid to his

charge, I was now asked by divers, in a sneering Way, what my Sentiments were of him ; which indeed puzzled me ; *Noscitur ex Sociis* was the common By-word ; and all I had to say was that he must stand or fall by himself, when his Cause came before the Trustees."

There spoke the true voice of Savannah in the Province of Georgia concerning John Wesley, runaway priest of Christ Church Parish.

John Burnside and his wife, Wesley's old friend Miss Bovey, remained faithful to the last. They had secretly provided for him their boat and secured the rowers. The boat was to slip down the river to Purysburg, from whence Wesley would make his way to Port Royal, and to Charleston. From Charleston he would go to England.

He held services for his little thin congregation that night, knowing he was looking upon their faces for the last time. For the last time he blessed them, and they sang one of those hymns he had written and had sung in his garden. For the last time his voice was heard in Georgia.

" As soon as evening prayers were over, about eight o'clock, the tide then serving, I shook off the dust of my feet, and left Georgia, after having preached the gospel there (with much weakness indeed and many infirmities), not as I ought, but as I was able. . . . ' Oh, that thou hadst known, . . . in this thy day, the things which make for thy peace.' "

He knew not what lay ahead of him, of good or ill. He had not yet found himself, he had not, as he counted it, been converted. His future was as dark to him as the river on which he was journeying, under a sky without stars. Behind him, dry in the dust, was left the dew of his youth, the glamour of the heart, the rose of love's desire.

Never, no matter what great hour might lie ahead ; never, no matter what high destiny, what great and holy mission God might have in store for him ; never, never more to know such joy, such love, such ecstasy, such high tide of ardour, and emotion, and despair.

He was never to see her face again, nor hear her speak, nor touch her hand that had held in its palm the one love of his life. John Wesley was to beget no babe of Sophy's bearing. Instead, the little indomitable man, wrapped in his cloak, his eyes sombre in his white face, his lips a line inflexible and uncoercible, went forth to sow in the womb of the waiting future the seed of the gigantic, one child of his begetting, the seed of the Methodist Church.

THE END

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